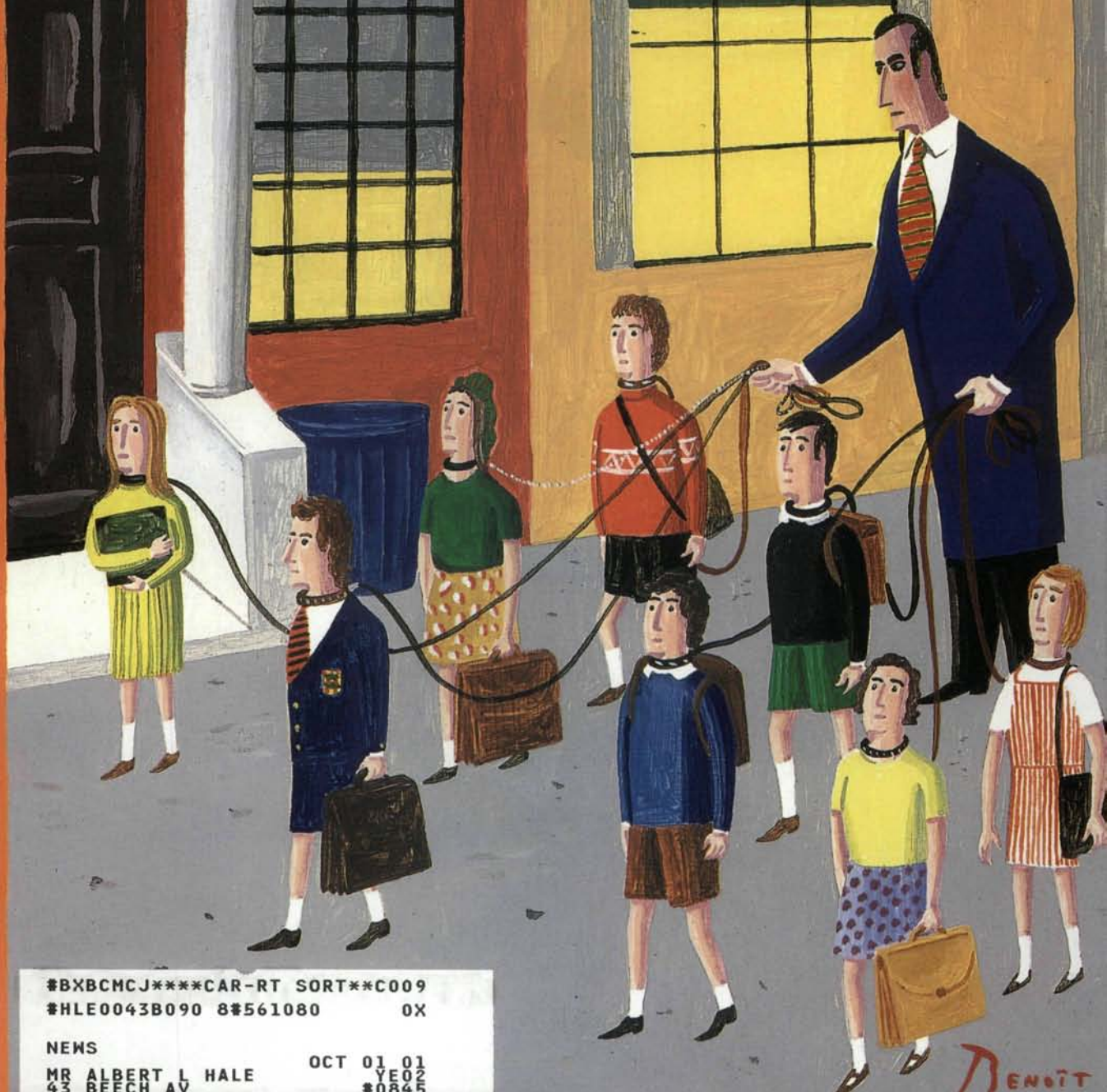


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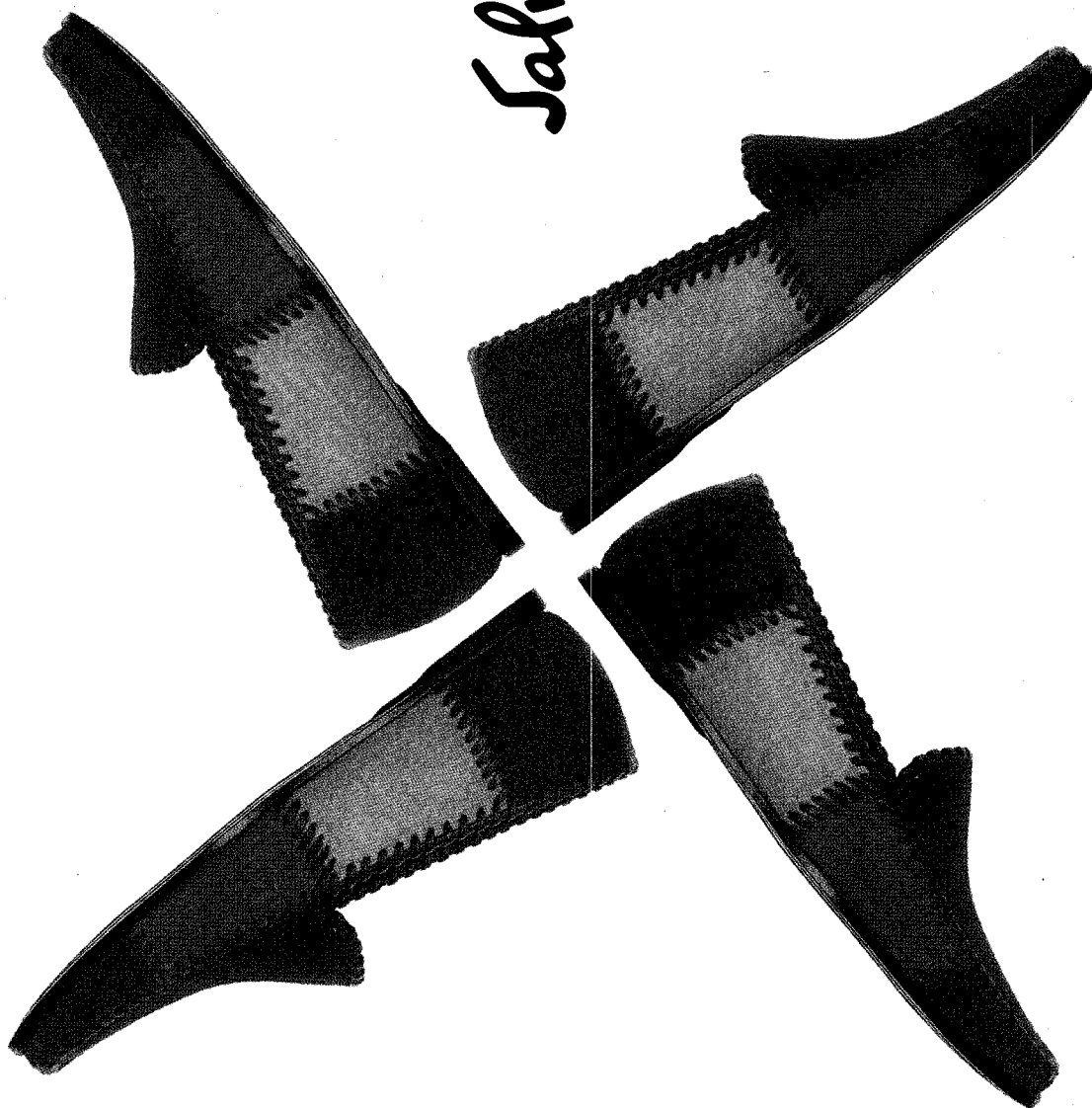
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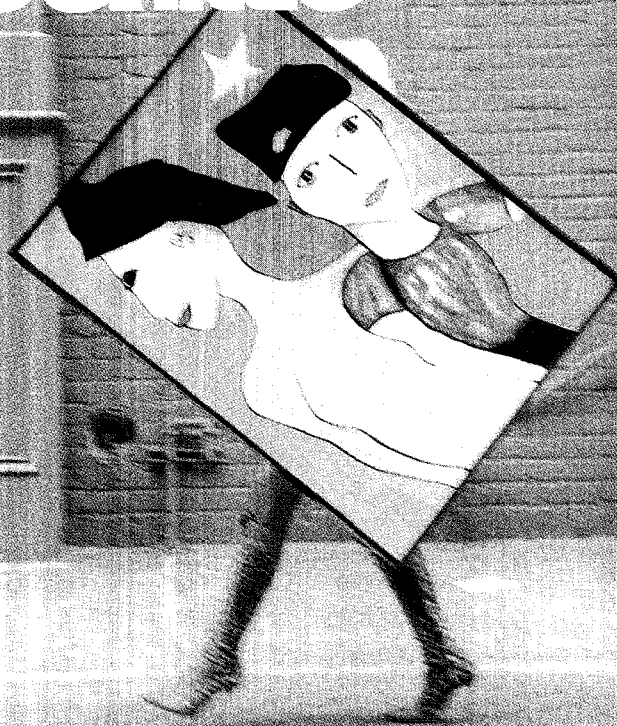
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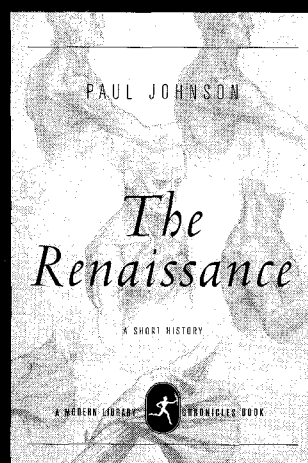
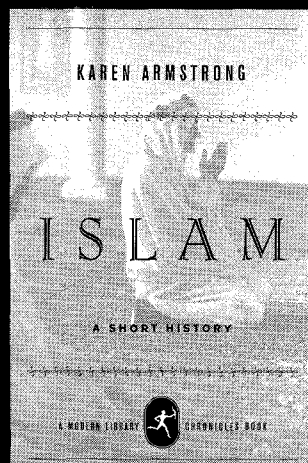
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THE NEW YORKER

SEPTEMBER 11, 2000

- 10 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN
35 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
Putin's next act; Wall Street's cash phobia.

- Peter J. Boyer* 42 ANNALS OF POLITICS
When Missiles Collide
How Clinton finessed his Star Wars dilemma.

- Steve Martin* 50 SHOUTS & MURMURS
Shouters

- Daphne Merkin* 52 RECKONINGS
Trouble in the Tribe
American Jews in conflict.

- John Cassidy* 58 PROFILES
The Hell-Raiser
Steve Dunleavy, cop-loving tabloid legend.

- Jonathan Schell* 65 TAKES
Flying over Vietnam.

- John McPhee* 70 A REPORTER AT LARGE
A Selective Advantage
Why fish do what they do.

- Firooz Zabedi, Kevin Conley* 76 SHOWCASE
Mockumentarian. Christopher Guest.

- Michael Roberts* 82 SKETCHBOOK
Brazil hits the runway.

- Edwidge Danticat* 84 FICTION
"Water Child"

THE CRITICS BOOKS

- Louis Menand* 92 *The wrong way to write.*
Joan Acocella 95 *Kazuo Ishiguro's "When We Were Orphans."*
97 Briefly Noted

- Whitney Balliett* 98 JAZZ
The Gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt.

- Joan Acocella* 101 DANCING
Mark Morris at the opera.

- Anthony Lane* 104 THE CURRENT CINEMA
"Nurse Betty," "Whipped."

POEMS

- Sharon Olds* 78 "His Costume"
Karl Kirchwey 94 "Untitled"

COVER "Obedience School," by Benoit van Innis THE BACK PAGE "Bush on Education,"
by Steve Brodner DRAWINGS Danny Shanahan, J. B. Handelsman, David Sipress,
William Haefeli, Michael Crawford, Harry Bliss, Leo Cullum, James Stevenson,
Mick Stevens, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Jack Ziegler, Roz Chast, Frank Cotham, J. P. Rini,
Liza Donnelly, Victoria Roberts, Alex Gregory



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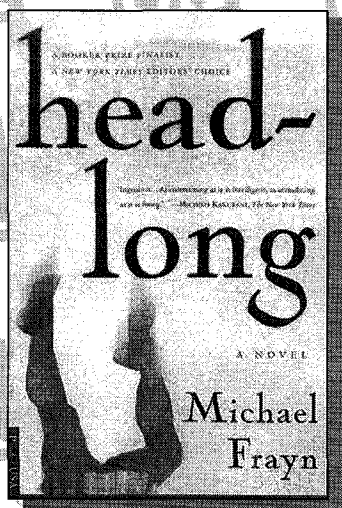
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John McPhee ("A Selective Advantage," p. 70) is the author of twenty-five books and the recipient of a Pulitzer Prize for "Annals of the Former World."

John Cassidy ("The Hell-Raiser," p. 58), a staff writer since 1995, was an editor at the New York Post from 1993 to 1995.

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Edwidge Danticat (Fiction, p. 84) has published two novels, "Breath, Eyes, Memory" and "The Farming of Bones," as well as a collection of short stories, "Krik? Krak!"

Louis Menand (Books, p. 92) is a staff writer who has contributed to the magazine since 1991.

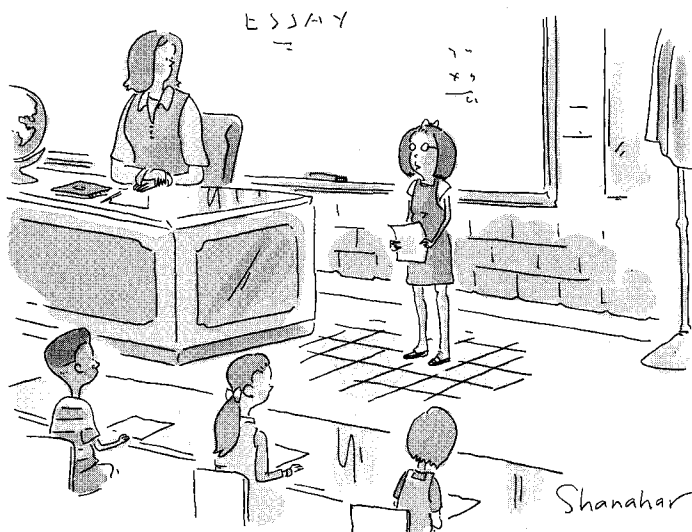
Peter J. Boyer ("When Missiles Collide," p. 42) is working on a book about Pentecostalism. His PBS documentary "The Choice," about the Presidential election, will be broadcast in October.

Whitney Balliett (Jazz, p. 98) will publish "Collected Works: A Journal of Jazz, 1954-2000" in November.

Steve Martin (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 50) is the author of "Pure Drivel," a collection of humorous essays. His novella, "Shopgirl," will be published next month.

Harry Benson (Photograph, p. 59) is working on a retrospective of his work of the last fifty years. It will be published in the fall of 2001.

Ralph Steadman (Illustration, p. 71) has illustrated many books, including Roald Dahl's "The Mildenhall Treasure," which comes out this month. ♦



"Before I read about my summer vacation, I'd like to ask that all pagers, beepers, and cell phones be turned off."

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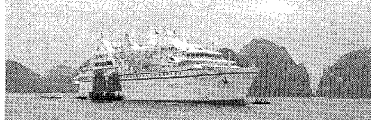
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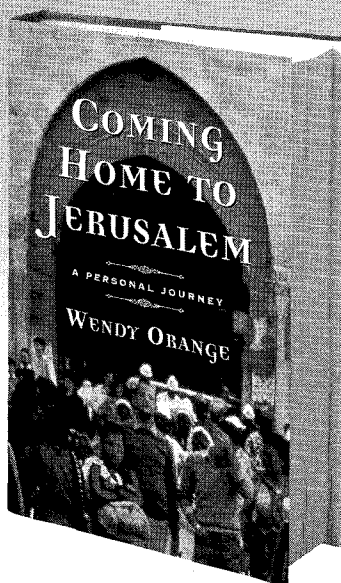


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END OF THE NEWS

So journalists at ABC are dismayed that a lawyer with no journalistic experience was put in charge of the news division ("Bad News," by Jane Mayer, August 14th)? The same thing has happened in the health-care, education, and insurance fields, and even in such traditionally public-sector institutions as libraries and prisons. In the name of the bottom line, "managers" with M.B.A.s and law degrees have been brought in to supervise professionals who may know the right way to do a job, but not the most profitable. This trend will continue until we realize that not everything has its price; professional integrity certainly shouldn't.

Sheilendr Khipple, M.D.
Mount Prospect, Ill.

The dwindling television-news coverage of the political conventions reflects not a deterioration of journalistic standards but the opposite. George W. Bush and Al Gore both pay the networks huge sums to televise their thirty-second campaign advertisements. Why should an event that essentially amounts to a week-long campaign ad—a "politomercial"—be deemed hard news and granted unlimited air time?

David English
Somerville, Mass.

I agree with David Westin, the president of ABC News, that the evening news, like the afternoon paper before it, is at risk of dying. When I get to the office in the morning, I turn on my computer, go on-line, and check the headlines periodically throughout the day. By the time I go home, I've seen all the news I care to. But I still wish that the broadcast news would choose to age gracefully, rather than put on the cheap cosmetic of celebrity interviews, and die a dignified death.

John Freivalds
Minneapolis, Minn.

SAVE THE MALL

On a recent sight-seeing visit to Washington, D.C., my family and I were a bit shocked by how the Mall looked

up close, with its exhausted grass and weary gravel paths. The truth is that, despite the spectacles around it, the Mall looks rather lonesome and neglected when it is not filled with people. But when it is crowded with Americans protesting, or making one point or another, on what Paul Goldberger calls "open space made sacred by such events as Marian Anderson's 1939 recital and the civil-rights march of 1963" (The Talk of the Town, August 7th), it is perfect in size and design.

While I wholeheartedly support the construction of a monument to veterans of the Second World War, I agree with Goldberger that it should be placed on the periphery, so that the central alley of the Mall can be preserved for those public occasions.

Shawn Diggs Wilson
Lakeland, Fla.

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

Nancy Franklin is right to point out the shortcomings of the reality-TV program "Big Brother" (On Television, August 14th)—the dumb challenges, the condescension, the facile commentary from the inadequately talented host. But, in a way, these weaknesses are beside the point of the show. This is a lifeboat situation: people aren't particularly interested in witnessing moments of self-improvement or discovery. They tune in to watch other people crack.

Martha Pervin
Indialantic, Fla.

CORRECTION: The pole vaulter in the photograph on page 120 of the August 21st-28th issue was misidentified. Her name is Alicia Warlick.

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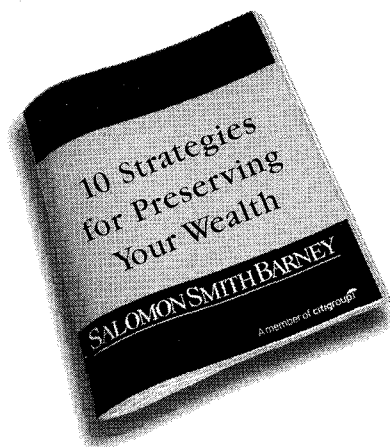
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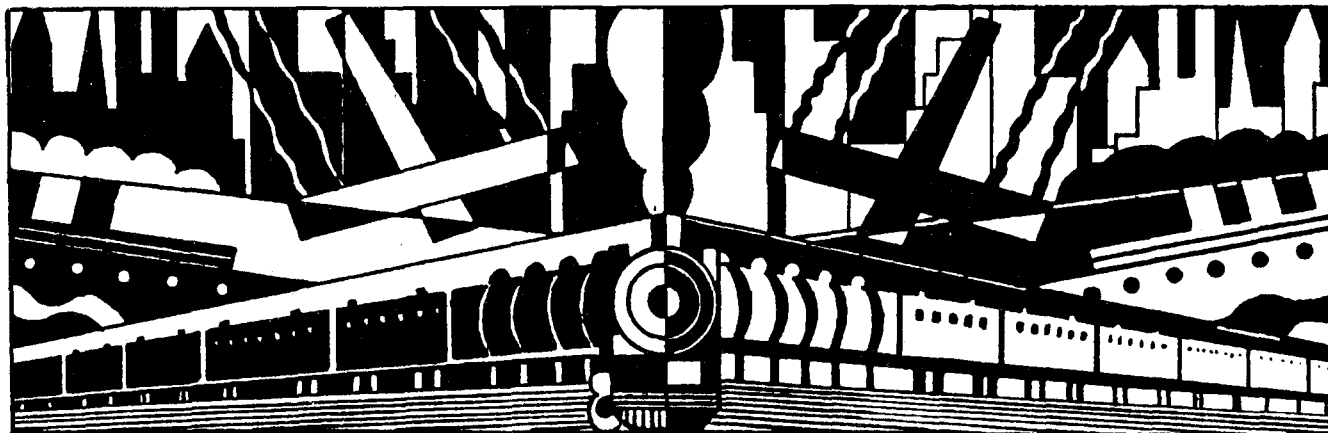
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



THE THEATRE OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

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AND GOD CREATED GREAT WHALES

An encore engagement of Rinde Eckert's musical-theatre work, in which a composer with a degenerative disease struggles to finish an opera based on "Moby Dick." In previews. (45 Bleecker Theatre, at 45 Bleecker St. 307-4100.)

BLITHE SPIRIT

Noel Coward's 1941 comedy is the Pearl Theatre Company's season opener. In previews through Sept. 10. Opens Sept. 11 at 7. (80 St. Mark's Pl. 598-9802.)

BOXING 2000

From Richard Maxwell, a fable about two half-brothers training for the ring. Opens Sept. 6 at 8 and runs through Sept. 30. (Present Company Theatorium, 196 Stanton St. 420-8877.)

GORE VIDAL'S THE BEST MAN

A revival of Vidal's 1960 political drama, starring Charles Durning, Spalding Gray, Chris Noth, Elizabeth Ashley, Christine Ebersole, and Michael Learned, among others. Directed by Ethan McSweeney. In previews. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

LIFEGAME

A show by the British troupe Improbable Theatre, in which a different onstage guest's life story becomes the basis of the drama each night. Previews begin Sept. 12. (Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

LYPSINKA! THE BOXED SET

The star (a.k.a. John Epperson) makes her first concert appearance in seven years. Previews Sept. 7-9. Opens Sept. 10 at 8:30 and runs through Sept. 24. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 206-1515.)

QUEEN ESTHER: UNEMPLOYED SUPERSTAR

A one-woman musical comedy, in which the singer and actress examines issues of race, gender, and power. Sept. 8 at 8:30. (Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

RICHARD II AND CORIOLANUS

Ralph Fiennes and Linus Roache lead the casts in repertory performances of Shakespeare's plays, staged by London's Almeida Theatre Company. Jonathan Kent is the director. "Richard II": Preview on Sept. 6. Opens Sept. 7 at 8 and runs through Oct. 1. ♦ "Coriolanus": Matinée preview on Sept. 9. Opens that night at 7:30 and runs through Sept. 30. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

SIGNATURE THEATRE COMPANY

This year the company presents a season of new plays by various authors, beginning with "A Lesson

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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10	11	12				

Before Dying." Romulus Linney's stage adaptation of the novel by Ernest J. Gaines. In previews. (555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

WELCOME TO OUR CITY

Thomas Wolfe's rarely produced, controversial play about race (it originally called for white actors in blackface) was written in 1923, while he was a student at Harvard. Previews begin Sept. 8. (Mint Theatre, 311 W. 43rd St. 315-0231.)

WHERE EVERYTHING IS EVERYTHING

Daisy Eagan and Paul Sparks portray a shy graphic designer and a brash financial consultant, in a romance by Stephen Spoonamore. In previews. (New York Performance Works, 128 Chambers St. 539-8892.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AIDA

Disney's new musical—five years in the making and a product of Pharaonic expense—is, if not perfect, a lively, polished entertainment with bursts of joyful flamboyance worthy of its composer, Elton John. The two female leads—Heather Headley, as Aida, and Sherie René Scott, as Amneris—shine in their different ways, and Bob Crowley's brilliant sets give the show both visual dazzle and emotional resonance. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/10/00.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.)

AQUILA THEATRE COMPANY

The British-American touring troupe continues its New York residency with Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac." (Clark Studio, Lincoln Center. 279-4200. Closes Sept. 17.)

BERLIN TO BROADWAY WITH KURT WEILL

A revue celebrating the composer's career, starring Lorinda Lisitz, Björn Olsson, Michael Winther, and Veronica Mittenzwei. (The Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 279-4200.)

COPENHAGEN

Michael Frayn's play speculates on the controversial 1941 reunion of the two giants of quantum mechanics—the physicists Niels Bohr (Philip Bosco) and Werner Heisenberg (Michael Cumpsty). It is so meticulous, so admirable, and so grave that you want to touse its well-kempt appearance and tell it to lighten up. Nevertheless, the director, Mi-

chael Blakemore, manages to make dynamic and suggestive an evening that consists of three actors (Blair Brown plays Margrethe Bohr) and three chairs. (4/24 & 5/1/00) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE CRADLE WILL ROCK

The Jean Cocteau Rep opens the season with Marc Blitzstein's 1937 labor-movement musical. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

THE CRUMPLE ZONE

A dark comedy by Buddy Thomas, set during a Christmas gathering of five gay men. (Rattlestick Theatre, 224 Waverly Pl. 206-1515.)

DIRTY BLONDE

Mae West's flirty and dirty persona is the subject of a cunningly written, raffish evening conceived by the writer-actress Claudia Shear and the director James Lapine. Mae's story is recounted with brio by two fans—Jo (Shear, who doubles winningly as Mae) and Charlie (Tom Riis Farrell). The success of the play rests not on the louche facts of West's life but on the intersection of her story with the sweetness of the evolving relationship between the two lost souls who narrate it. (2/7/00) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DON JUAN IN HELL

Donal Donnelly, Celeste Holm, James A. Stephens, and Fritz Weaver give a dramatic reading of the third-act dream scene from Shaw's "Man and Superman," under the direction of Charlotte Moore. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Sept. 17.)

GODSPELL

An updated version of the 1971 rock musical, with music and new lyrics by Stephen Schwartz. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 239-6200.)

IMPERFECT CHEMISTRY

A musical comedy by Albert M. Tapper and James Racheff, about two geneticists at a philanthropic laboratory who are seduced into finding a cure for baldness. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave. between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

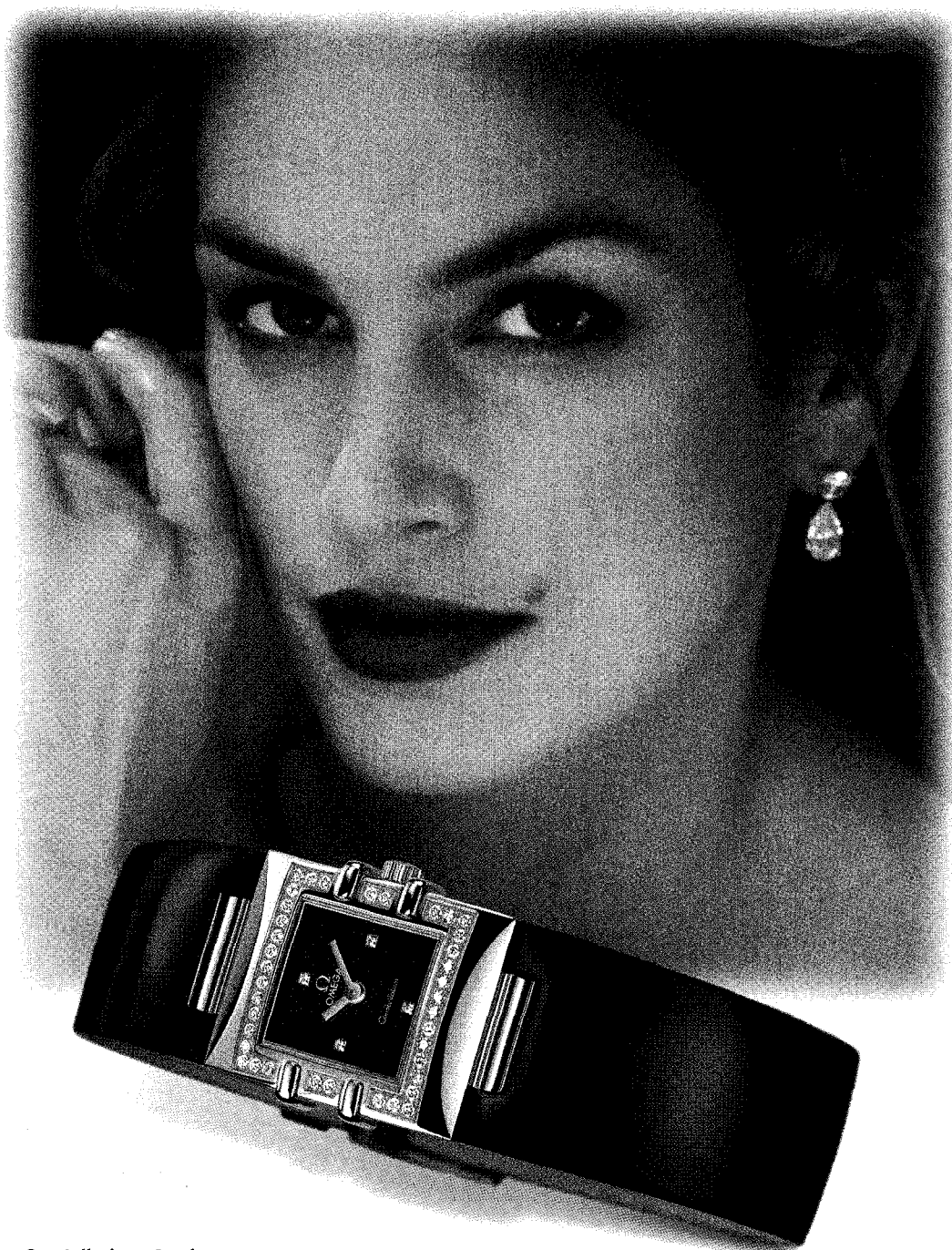
IT AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT THE BLUES

A revue tracing the history of the musical form, which had its New York première at the New Victory Theatre in 1999. With Charles Bevel, Carter Calvert, Debra Laws, Gregory Porter, Cheryl Alexander, and Michael Mandell. Jim Ehinger is the musical director. (B.B. King Blues Club & Grill, 243 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

THE JERUSALEM SYNDROME

The comic Marc Maron is fully aware of all the dubious idols that have replaced God in our culture, and he pulls no punches in pointing them out. In his one-man show, a heartbreakingly funny, faux-naïf travelogue, he leads the audience into purgatory

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and back, as he tries to find some kind of spiritual resonance in Hollywood fame, cigarettes, the Wiz, Coke (and coke), and Israel, where, he claims, he just wasn't "Jewy" enough to achieve the transcendence the land offers to the less materialistic. Maron may not be the Messiah, but he's definitely the guy to tell you where you won't find Him. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER

The Roundabout's revival of Kaufman and Hart's evergreen 1939 satire of Hollywood and of New York literary society is pure gold. Nathan Lane is back onstage where he belongs, playing Sheridan Whiteside, a noxiously pompous critic and radio personality who commandeers the bewildered family and staff of a staid Ohio household—where he slipped on ice after a dinner in his honor and ended up in a wheelchair. The play itself is a model of comic construction and is chock-full of vintage stage business, which the excellent cast executes with gleeful nineteen-forties snap. Jean Smart, Byron Jennings, and Lewis J. Stadlen, as three famous personalities who pop in for a visit, are all brilliant. Jerry Zaks is the director. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300.)

THE MUSIC MAN

A delightful revival of Meredith Willson's 1957 musical, directed by Susan Stroman and starring Craig Bierko, who is making his Broadway debut in the role of Professor Harold Hill. The show hits us with the simplicity and seamlessness of a perfect fairy tale, and it puts music in its proper place—right up there with all the other miracles of life. (5/22/00) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

RIVERDANCE

The Irish troupe of dancers, singers, and musicians. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER

John Travolta is not easy to replace, nor are the ashes of disco fever likely to reignite, as this show, based on the 1977 movie, demonstrates. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

SOUL OF AN INTRUDER

A psychological thriller by Steve Braunstein, about a triangle between a woman and two of her former lovers, who come back into her life at the same time. (Theatre 3, at 311 W. 43rd St. 279-4200.)

SPINNING INTO BUTTER

Rebecca Gilman's surprising, well-crafted play about a racist incident at a mostly white Vermont liberal-

arts college, where, as one character puts it, "not being racist means you got along really well with your nanny." When someone pins a hate letter on the door of one of the school's only black students, the administration stumbles around in a comically paranoid, disturbing stupor, trying to keep the public-relations lid on and obviously applying righteous public-forum Band-Aids to a gaping social wound. The drama is subtle, yet more powerful than it seems at first: the audience never meets the wronged black student, and the only honest feelings about racial divisiveness are expressed out of range of the censoring ear of inept authority. Hope Davis, who delivers a genuinely troubled monologue as a dean of students, leads the fine cast. Daniel Sullivan is the director. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes Sept. 16.)

WHY WE DON'T BOMB THE AMISH

A one-woman comedy skewering cultural hypocrisies, written and performed by Casey Fraser, and accompanied by a band performing jazz, blues, funk, and hard-core punk. (Gershwin Hotel, 7 E. 27th St. 279-4200.)

LONG RUNS

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN

Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES

Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

CABARET

Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

CATS

Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. (Closes Sept. 10.)

CHICAGO

Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

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Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.

DE LA GUARDA

Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.

DINNER WITH FRIENDS

Variety Arts, 110 Third Ave., at 14th St. 239-6200.

THE FANTASTICKS

Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY

Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200.

FOSSE

Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

FULLY COMMITTED

Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.

I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE

Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

JEKYLL & HYDE

Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

KISS ME, KATE

Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

THE LION KING

New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

LES MISÉRABLES

Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

PERFECT CRIME

Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.

RENT

Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.

STOMP

Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477.

SWING

St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING

St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.

THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES

Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

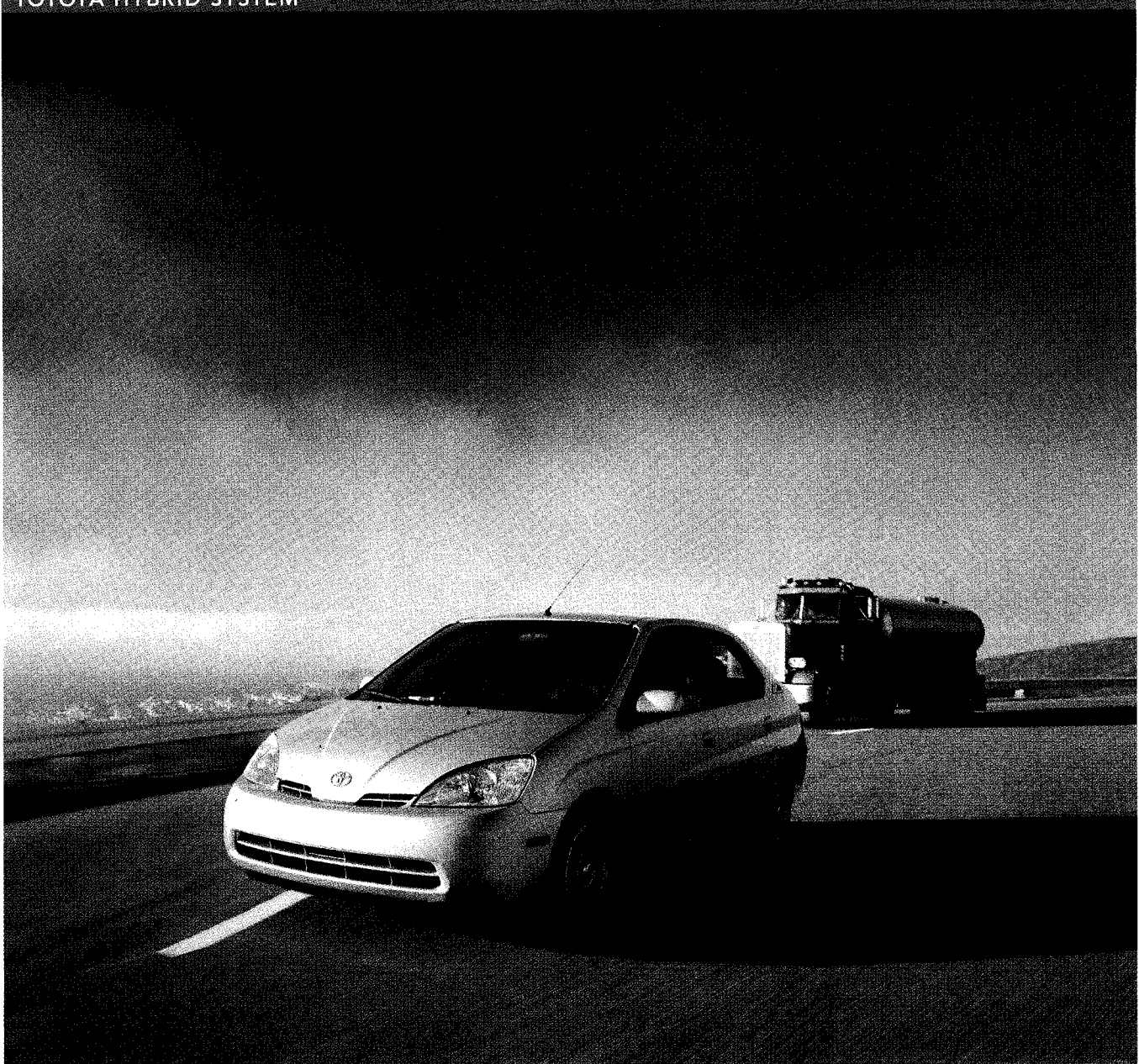


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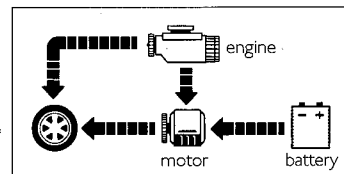
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DANCE

"EVENING STARS: 2000 DANCE SERIES"

The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council presents a weeklong series of free dance performances, all of which begin at 7, at the World Trade Center Plaza. Sept. 10: Ronald K. Brown/Evidence and Rennie Harris/Pure Movement. ♦ Sept. 11: "Jazz Riffs," with works performed by cast members of "Fosse" and "Chicago," Jane Comfort and Company, Silver Bells, the Young Hoofers, and A Few Good Men Dancin'. (For more information, call 435-6600. Through Sept. 17.)

"DANCENOW DOWNTOWN"

The sixth annual festival acts as a sort of welcome back for dancers (who, if they're lucky, have been off performing in woodland or seaside resorts) and kicks off the new season with a choreographic gallimaufry, with more than a hundred and fifty troupes and soloists at four venues. Sept. 7 at 7: Keely Garfield's Sinister Slapstick, Neta Dance Company, Zvi Gotheiner & Dancers, and four

"VARIATIONS IN A FOREIGN LAND III"

The Yangtze Repertory Theatre offers works by four choreographers: Erika Akoh, from Japan, Cha-Lee Chan, from Hong Kong, Maura Lee, from Korea, and Max Luna III, from the Philippines. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Sept. 8-9 at 8 and Sept. 10 at 3.)

JETTÉ PERFORMANCE COMPANY

The troupe, under the direction of Jay T. Jenkins, who has choreographed music videos and concerts for Prince, Salt-N-Pepa, Chaka Khan, and others, performs a selection of works, including "New-funkfoya" and "Jazzlz." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Sept. 7-9 at 8 and Sept. 10 at 3.)

"ASSEMBLAGE"

The choreographers James Hansen and Rachel Thorne Germond split a bill, with Hansen offering "Pulse," "Allargando Bianco," and "Dusty Fields," and Germond presenting "Rejoinder," "Whoa! La Gioconda," and "Out from Afar(m)," among other works. (Merce Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. For reservations, call 718-768-5508. Sept. 8-9 at 9.)



Brian Wilson, backed by the Long Island Philharmonic, at the Jones Beach Theatre.

other acts. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St.) ♦ Sept. 7 at 9: Jeanine Durning and Arianne Anthony & Company, among others. (Joyce SoHo.) ♦ Sept. 8 at 7: Robin Staff & Peter Anzalone, Jeanette Stoner & Dancers, Karl Anderson/Slamfest, and others. (Joyce SoHo.) ♦ Sept. 9 at 1: Cherylyn Lavagnino, Jody Oberfelder Dance Projects, Eric Dunlap, and more. (Joyce SoHo.) ♦ Sept. 9 at 5: Lisa Nicks and Doug Elkins, Gerald Casel and Dancers, students from the LaGuardia High School for the Performing Arts, and other troupes. (For more information, see www.dancenow.org. Through Sept. 16.)

NIGHT LIFE CONCERTS

TRAVIS

Britain's flavor of the month is an exquisitely lean touring machine that honed its skills recently opening for Oasis. Travis isn't doing so badly in record stores, either: the band watched its second album, "The Man Who," a frequently brilliant bell jar of broken hearts and bad dreams, take up residence atop the U.K. charts earlier this year. Given that the

quarter's front man, Fran Healy, seems to have been raised on Prozac, Travis's rise—which may yet be duplicated Stateside—would seem to be a triumphant return to navel gazing. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Sept. 6 at 7:30.)

THE MOONLIGHTERS

This charming local band (two singers, two ukuleles, an upright bass, and a steel guitar, the last played exquisitely by former Helmet bassist Henry Bogdan) tackles swinging Hawaiian tunes from the twenties and thirties such as "Hula Blues" and "Honolulu March," along with a few originals in the same style. Take your grandmother or your sweetheart; either will leave humming. (World Trade Center Plaza. Sept. 7 at 6. No tickets necessary.)

CHRISTINA AGUILERA

Having now sold some six million records (her self-titled debut record has clung to the upper rungs of the charts for nearly a year), Aguilera has yet to overextend her welcome. This may have something to do with the fact that this teen-age rival to Britney Spears is a gifted singer with above-average instincts. Her next challenge will be to find a way past her decidedly second-rate material. With *Destiny's Child*. (Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. Sept. 8 at 7:30.)

COMPAY SEGUNDO

The ninety-three-year-old Cuban singer and guitarist, who appeared on the Buena Vista Social Club album, comes to town with a program of *son* music, a style he helped create. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Sept. 8 at 8.)

MARIANNE FAITHFULL

More than two decades after the exquisitely abrasive "Broken English" proved that she was something far more interesting than a former Rolling Stones groupie, Faithfull has maintained a semi-distinguished career as ingénue, raconteur, and chanteuse. Her most recent collection, "Vagabond Ways," proved that, like a good Burgundy, she's only improved as she's aged. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Sept. 9-10 at 8.)

BRIAN WILSON

An icon of composition whose contributions to the American songbook rank alongside those of Copland, Gershwin, and Bernstein, Wilson revisits his masterpiece Beach Boys album, "Pet Sounds" (the album that scared the Beatles into elevating their game), at New York's seaside auditorium, accompanied by the Long Island Philharmonic. Bring a jacket to ward off cool ocean breezes and the inevitable goose bumps. (Jones Beach Theatre. Sept. 10 at 8.)

HANSON

Since releasing "This Time Around," the follow-up to the phenomenally successful 1997 album "Middle of Nowhere" (perhaps you remember a little single called "MMMBop"), the brothers three have suffered something of a drop-off in their matinee-idol rating. Nevertheless, what the boys sacrificed in chart success and celebrity, they have more than made up for with a tougher rock sound. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Sept. 11 at 7.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL

243 W. 42nd St. (269-4849)—In 1965, a tornado of a singer named Koko Taylor (here Sept. 8-9) blew the roof off of Chicago's fabled Chess Records studios with "Wang Dang Doodle," her classic duet with Willie Dixon. As the reigning Queen of the Blues, she's won more W. C. Handy Awards than any other female blues performer—and at sixty-something she can still rattle the rafters.

BOTTOM LINE

15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Sept. 6-7: The Mick Taylor Blues Band. The former Rolling Stones guitarist hosts an evening of back-porch blues. Sept. 8: Bo Diddley. Those pounding tom-toms, those sinewy maracas, that distorted,

BLAIR DRAWSON

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fuse-blowing guitar. Call it hambone, call it shave and a haircut, two bits, call it anything you want—it's still going to be the Bo Diddley beat.

BOWERY BALLROOM

6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Sept. 6: **Robert Bradley's Blackwater Surprise.** Bradley, a blind former street busker from Alabama by way of Detroit, turned to Motor City star of the moment Kid Rock for help on two tracks of the band's latest album, "Time to Discover." Let's give it up for Rock, if only for the commercial cachet his name brings Bradley, whose tight band deserves as wide an audience as possible: it moves effortlessly among styles, from Motown-inflected R. & B. to driving Texas-style blues to traditional soul. But Bradley has such a haunting gravel-and-silk voice that the band's solid musicianship is nearly upstaged on each song. Sept. 7: **Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks.** At fifty-nine, Hicks has probably forever lost all hope of being recognized as anything but a cult legend. One of pop's finest eccentrics, Hicks spent most of the sixties and seventies as a Bay Area subversive, making disarmingly pungent country-flavored rock and pushing acoustic music into uncharted territory. Hicks basically sat out the eighties, but over the past few years he's been reclaiming his dyspeptic niche in the rock-and-roll pantheon, by touring sporadically and by releasing a new album, "Beatin' the Heat," which features contributions by such pop luminaries as Tom Waits, Elvis Costello, Rickie Lee Jones, and Bette Midler.

BROWNIES

169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Sept. 9-10: **Unwound.** These veterans of the Olympia, Washington, indie-rock scene descend on the East Village for two nights of raw power chords, cyclonic guitar feedback, and rumbling rhythms.

IRVING PLAZA

17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Sept. 7: **Jorge Ben Jor.** The great Brazilian guitarist is one of the pioneers of tropicalia, a genre developed in the late sixties which infused Brazilian pop with American rock and roll, among other influences. ♦ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737.

KNITTING FACTORY

74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Sept. 9: **Adventures in Stereo** may be a band from Glasgow, Scotland, but it sounds like it's from mid-sixties California. The songwriter Jim Beattie was inspired by Brian Wilson, and his short, sunny songs are polished to a dreamy glow. Judith Boyle takes care of the vocals, and her voice seems to reach right through time itself. Nostalgia never sounded so good.

MAXWELL'S

1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—Sept. 7: **Adventures in Stereo** (see the Knitting Factory).

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL

59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Sept. 8-Oct. 14: Vocalist **Maureen McGovern** takes over in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

BIRDLAND

315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Sept. 7-9: The **Andrew Hill** sextet. Hill's music is dark, elusive, unsettling, and beautiful. The now-you-see-him-now-you-don't pianist and composer has played the role of the outsider for so long that his recent return to the spotlight must have had dizzying effects on him. Hill's artistic peak was in the nineteen-sixties, the only decade that could spawn and tolerate the inherent mysteries of his oblique harmonic stance, the derailed accents of his playing, his seesaw mid-tempo melodies, and his trademark dirgelike ballads. It was private music that never really fit. And as "Dusk," his first record in ten years, exhibits, it still doesn't. Hill continues to compose gripping tunes that mess gleefully with harmony and rhythm while favoring cloudier jazz atmospheres. Luckily for him, he's got a smart

group of younger players itching to take all this on, including the trumpeter **Ron Horton** and the saxophonist **Marty Erlich**. Dining.

BLUE NOTE

131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Sept. 10: The **Stanley Turrentine** quintet. You judge a tenor saxophonist like Turrentine not by his virtuosity but by his sound—in this case, a huge, rounded calling card of warm, gritty soul. With vocalist **Marlena Shaw** and her trio.

IRIDIUM

48 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Sept. 10: On the electrifying 1999 album "Friendly Fire," the saxophonist **Greg Osby** sat in with fellow-saxophonist **Joe Lovano's** group. For this promis-

SWEET BASIL

88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Sept. 10: The **Paul Motian Electric Bebop Band.** Having helped alter the entire conception of conventional jazz drumming as we know it, Motian shouldn't be expected to get all reverential when it comes to playing bebop. The innovative percussionist's foray into the jazz past is usually fleshed out by two electric guitarists, an electric bass, and two saxophonists. Their heft is balanced by the leader's blissfully twisted swing.

UP OVER JAZZ CAFÉ

351 Flatbush Ave., at Seventh Ave., Brooklyn (718-398-5413)—Sept. 8-9: The **Eric Alexander** quartet, featuring **Harold Mabern**. With a spa-



"Volume: Bed of Sound," an installation at P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center.

ing gig, Lovano joins Osby's band. Between the two smoking saxmen, both about as good as it gets these days, and Osby's unstoppable rhythm section, it should be quite a showdown. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul**.

JAZZ STANDARD

116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through Sept. 10: The **John Abercrombie** quintet. The success of the guitarist's recent release, "Open Land," was due in no small part to the work of the trumpeter **Kenny Wheeler**, whose highly individual playing has graced the recordings of Anthony Braxton, Dave Holland, Paul Bley, and others over the past twenty-five years. Abercrombie, in turn, has also added his own exacting touch and melodic finesse to Wheeler's fine recordings; their strings-and-brass weave is one of the most arresting sounds in contemporary jazz. Wheeler comes to town far too infrequently—he shouldn't be missed. Dining.

JOE'S PUB

425 Lafayette St. (539-8777)—Sept. 7: The clarinetist **Andy Biskin's** effervescent quintet slams together neo-Dixieland, Jimmy Giuffrè-esque chamber jazz, and Raymond Scott-inspired zaniness while still finding plenty of room for inspired improvisation and offbeat composition.

cious tone and the kind of energy endemic to the young and ambitious, the hard-bop tenor saxophonist **Alexander** has made a name for himself in the short time since he relocated from Chicago; the equally dynamic pianist **Mabern** is more than three decades older than the saxophonist, but he can still make his younger bandmate sweat.

VILLAGE VANGUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Sept. 17: The **Tommy Flanagan** trio. The world's finest jazz pianist settles in with his new trio, featuring bassist **David Williams** and the brilliant, if criminally underrated, drummer **Albert Heath**. The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra holds sway on Mondays.

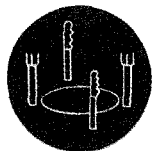
ART MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—The museum's entire collection of works by **Maurice Prendergast** (1858-1924), who was once hailed as "the poet laureate of the picnic," are exhibited together for the first time. Though the seventy pictures

range from quick pencil and watercolor jottings to labored oils, the subject is always the same: happy throngs of anonymous pedestrians with their parasols, pinafores, and perambulators. When American prosperity was a delightful new condition, these sunny idylls must have looked soothing and fresh. A century later, their subject matter seems saccharine, their technique a watered-down combination of Fauvist and Nabi styles. What endures is Prendergast's innocence. It's strangely comforting to imagine today's rollerbladers and day traders depicted with those same benign pats of pink, olive, and blue. Through Oct. 22. ♦ "Paughtraits," as he dubbed them, made John Singer Sargent famous, but he was testy about the genre. "I abhor and abjure them, and hope never to do another, especially of the Upper Classes," he wrote to a fellow painter. He would, one imagines, have been delighted by "Beyond the Portrait Studio," an exhibition of his landscapes and works on paper, most of them donated to the museum half a century ago by the artist's sister. The hundred or so images on view show Sargent at his amazing best and embarrassing worst, from his dazzling watercolors of sunlit brooks to his sentimental homoerotic scenes of English soldiers sunbathing. Among the most astonishing images are the earliest: at fourteen, Sargent's technical facility was already eerie, with a mechanical precision that cools one's exhilaration.

TABLES FOR TWO



BRASSERIE

100 E. 53rd St. (751-4840)—This is not the place for an affair: a long and dramatic gangplank lined with illuminated glass deposits you smack in the center of the bright and spacious main dining room. Above the bar, a dozen TV monitors broadcast motion-blur images of new arrivals (well, some of them: the equipment apparently can't detect patrons under five-three). Naturally, the place attracts a crowd that's dressed for the spotlight, in well-tailored or tight-fitting getups, toying with cell phones and Fendi baguettes and tossing back Cosmopolitans or Pisco Sours (priced at "9.5," as if you were paying in francs).

The fare is equally brash; in fact, the brasserie classics that dominate the menu—onion soup, steamed mussels, steak frites, croque monsieur—are printed in boldface, so that it's almost possible to order without losing eye contact with your dining companions. There's nothing wrong with the other items—the oysters come with a cupful of mignonette slushie (the menu calls it "granita"), which gives the generally fussy condiment some of the childish pleasures of cocktail sauce. But why waste time scouring the fine print? The classics here are, in fact, classics: the steak frites is thick, tender, and doused with French butter; the steamed mussels are relaxed in their buttery broth; and the croque monsieur is cheesy, chewy, toasty, and (*oui, madame*) buttery.

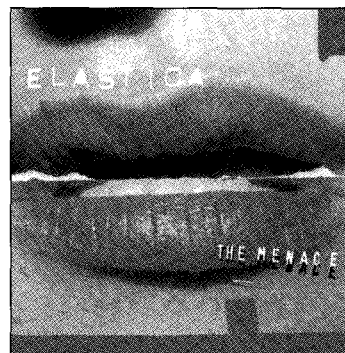
Above the bar and the bank of monitors, hundreds of bottles float colorfully behind a glowing, etched-glass wall, adding to the mood of buoyant immoderation—this may be the only restaurant in town where the maître d' keeps a stack of business cards on hand for all the diners inquiring about the architects (Diller + Scofidio). Allow this mood to continue through dessert: the beignets have an architecture all their own, with a burst of liquefied chocolate contained in a medallion-size doughnut, a sort of pancake *au chocolat*. And for left-overs the place supplies zip-lock neon-green doggie bags with the Brasserie logo. (Open weekdays for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, weekends for brunch and dinner. Entrées \$15-\$29.)

—Kevin Conley

BORDERS Words on Music



Chris Richards, Borders' Pop Music Expert, says "On *The Menace*, Elastica brings back the classic sound and rebellious attitude of bands like the Stranglers and the Fall. Creative, innovative and most importantly, in your face... Elastica has returned!"



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...Trashy guitar, fun-house noise and eat-this attitude."

Rolling Stone

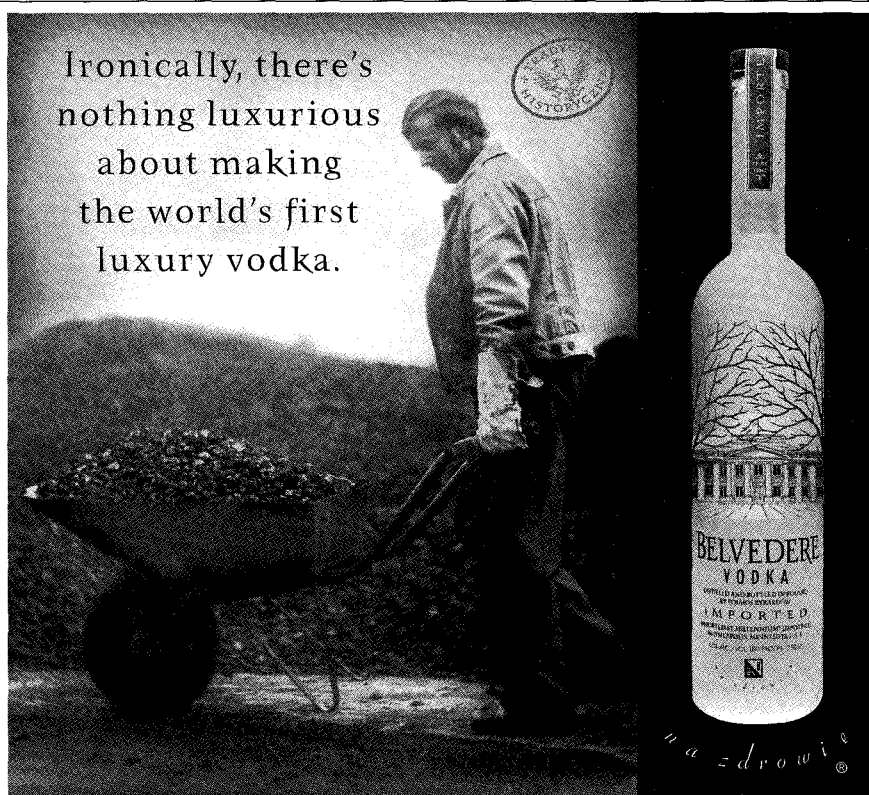
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Through Sept. 24. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Since late April, members of MOMA's professional and administrative staff have been on strike. But if you're loath to cross a picket line, you're in luck: Projects 70 presents banners, by a trio of artists (Jim Hodges, Beatrice Milhazes, and Faith Ringgold), which festoon the outside of the museum's façade. Milhazes's contribution is pure ornament, a swirl of tropical pink, green, and gold. Ringgold combines personal references and imagery by Matisse in a memorial to lost loved ones. Hodges's banner is by far the most winning. A pair of connect-the-dot constellations (corresponding to Libra and Scorpio, the astrological signs of the artist and his partner) grace a cloth the inky color of the night sky (the reverse side is Liberace gold). Each star is a cutout hole, strung with small bells, though the delicate chimes are often drowned out by the sound of zealous strikers squeezing plastic rats. Through Oct. 31. ♦ "Making Choices." The twenty-four-part show concentrates on works made between 1920 and 1960, drawn exclusively from the museum's extensive holdings, in a series of tightly focussed exhibitions, several devoted to a single artist (Man Ray, Cartier-Bresson, Morandi). Closing, in stages, on Sept. 19 and Sept. 26. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"1900: Art at the Crossroads" reopens a sort of art-world time capsule, contrasting representative works from the movements that took shape at the beginning of the past century. Through Sept. 10. ♦ The latest collaboration between the impishness of Frank Gehry and the grandiosity of Thomas Krens is on view in the form of a proposal for a new Guggenheim museum in Manhattan. To be built on a small island of its own, just below the South Street Seaport, the project is essentially Bilbao 2: far bigger, more crumpled and rococo, the museum's wriggling volumes float above a vast shadowed plaza with restaurants and an ice-skating rink. A single office tower rises at a Pisa-like angle from its center. The effect, we're told, would resemble a cloud-ringed skyscraper, but other things—a titanium tutu, an earthquake in a vent-assembly shop, an homage to late Frank Stella—come to mind as well. Gehry's large-scale models offer the most intriguing architectural conundrum of the year. Through Oct. 14. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—For "Synopsis Shuffle," an overblown and underwhelming show, Robert Rauschenberg made fifty-two paintings, incorporating signature photographic images, from elephants' hindquarters to a display of stuffed Minnie Mouse dolls. He then invited a dozen celebrities, from David Byrne to Martha Stewart, to create individual works comprised of three to seven panels each (the precise number was determined by lottery). The Whitney has devoted an entire floor to the results, which are cheerfully bland and nearly interchangeable. An exception is by Mathilde Krim, the founder of AmFAR, who turned one of her panels to the wall. Through Oct. 8. ♦ "The Art of Alice Neel," the museum's second retrospective devoted to the artist, and the first since her death, in 1984, offers seventy-five paintings and watercolors, including likenesses of artists (Andy Warhol, Robert Smithson), writers (Frank O'Hara, Kenneth Fearing), and family members. Through Sept. 17. ♦ "Carnival Strippers: Photographs by Susan Meiselas." Through Sept. 10. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 9.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM AT PHILIP MORRIS

120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (878-2550)—"Expanding Horizons" is a sly show of landscape photographs which displays real scenes alongside constructed, artificial ones. The difference is often hard to distinguish. Sally Gall's luminous black-and-white bayou is so still that it looks like a stage

ONLY CONNECT



WHEN HOME PLATE MEETS HOME PAGE

Eighty-six years ago this week, Babe Ruth took the mound at Hanlan's Point Stadium, in Toronto, where he pitched his Providence Grays to victory against the home-town Maple Leafs. The young southpaw also supplied his share of offense, blasting the ball into right field (or, as legend has it, into Lake Ontario) for a home run—his first as a professional. The Shot Heard Round Toronto was followed by more than seven hundred other round-trippers, an accumulation that makes a persuasive case for Ruth as the greatest player in the sport's history (or at least the side of it that made the papers before integration). Though Ruth has an official Web site devoted to his achievements (www.baberruth.com), he's not without competition; several other on-line shrines have sprung up in tribute to early diamond deities.

Equally famous for a boundless talent on the base paths and an off-field churlishness that sometimes bordered on the psychotic, Ty Cobb has already been the subject of a superb biography by Al Stump and a mediocre film by Ron Shelton. The unofficial Web site that bears the proud, polemical title *Ty Cobb: The Greatest of Them All* (members.aol.com/stealth792) chronicles the Georgia Peach's life and times, moving from his stint in the South Atlantic (or "Sally") leagues through his glory days. Fans more interested in the man than the player can also read about Cobb's finances (he was one of the earliest investors in Coca-Cola) and his personal travails (his mother accidentally shot and killed his father).

Ruth for power, Cobb for passion: for the poetry of a perfect swing, though, few players can approach Ted Williams. The last player to bat over .400 for a season (Colorado's Todd Helton is flirting with the mark this year), the Splendid Splinter has lent his name to the *Ted Williams Official Web Site* (www.tedwilliams.com), whose logo floats the Red Sox's immortal number 9 over a field of emerald and a crossbones of bats. The site's batting average is fairly high, with a wealth of biographical and statistical information; the only irritants are the pages that peddle memorabilia or promote contests with *Sluggo the Hit King*, a cartoon canine sidekick for Teddy Ballgame.

In the days before television, baseball's early stars became icons thanks to newsreels and newspapers. *The Sporting News* hosts a permanent on-line exhibit of the work of Charley Conlon (www.sportingnews.com/archives/conlon), a proofreader for the New York *World-Telegram* who, through his hobby as a photographer, immortalized the greats of the century's first half, from Cobb to Gehrig to Christy Mathewson. Ruth is here, of course, represented by two heroic action shots and a pair of pug-nosed portraits.

—Ben Greenman



set, while Hiroshi Sugimoto's animated underwater scene, one of the show's liveliest images, appears to predate photography by five hundred million years (it depicts a diorama of a primordial ocean in the Museum of Natural History). Vik Muniz pays homage to Robert Smithson's legendary conflation of nature and culture, "Spiral Jetty," by shooting a tabletop facsimile in his Brooklyn studio. Most confounding of all may be Emmet Gowin's aerial view of a toxic-water-treatment facility. The lyrically abstract image offers no hint of the plant's dangerous purpose. Through Oct. 6. (Open weekdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—The Hayden Planetarium, in the glass-sheathed Rose Center, looks like what might have arisen if Sony had commissioned I. M. Pei to build the Centre Pompidou. Space Show tickets, designed as 3-D postcard-size "passports to the universe," let you enjoy a twenty-minute cosmic journey, narrated by Tom Hanks, which goes from Earth to the Milky Way out to the Virgo Supercluster, then through a black hole right back home. Reservations for regular Space Shows are advised, and available at 769-5200. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART

Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Passages: Photographs in Africa by Carol Beckwith and Angela Fisher." For three decades, this London-based duo has traversed Africa like Bedouins, documenting the continent's vanishing tribal ceremonies. (Last year their work garnered an Award of Excellence from the United Nations Society for Artists and Writers.) The subjects range from a Surma mating ritual-cum-fight club in Ethiopia to a Himba wedding in Namibia where the bride smears her body with ochre and perfumed butterfat. The large-scale images are stunning—nearly a hundred are on view—but the unfortunate installation design occasionally relegates Beckwith and Fisher's work to a mere backdrop for all the artifacts and videotapes. Through Sept. 17. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

FRICK COLLECTION

1 E. 70th St. (288-0700)—Manhattan's most demure dating spot, the skylit garden court at the heart of the Frick mansion, has been enriched by a loan from the Greentree Foundation. The six new paintings, all from the former collection of John and Betsey Whitney, include landscape, still-life, and horse-racing scenes by Corot, Redon, Degas, and Manet. Also on view is Picasso's 1905 "Boy with a Pipe," a study in androgyny which may have been inspired, according to John Richardson, by an adolescent misfit called P'tit Louis, who haunted Picasso's studio at the Bateau Lavoire in the early years of the last century. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

MORGAN LIBRARY

29 E. 36th St. (685-0008)—"Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur." The cradle of Western civilization is rocking this summer as the museum showcases a dazzling cache of Mesopotamian loot unearthed by Sir Leonard Woolley in the twenties. The objects, from the middle of the third millennium B.C., include such renowned masterpieces of Sumerian art as the inaccurately named "Ram Caught in a Thicket" (Woolley cribbed the title from the Old Testament, but the creature is clearly a goat). The exquisitely modelled statuette, a scant seventeen inches tall, with gold leaf and lapis lazuli, has a pavé of shell shards the size and shape of nail clippings to substitute for fleece. Through Sept. 10. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5; Fridays, 10:30 to 8; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER

22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—"Volume: Bed of Sound." A two-part group show of sound art—though a provocative wall text by artist Max Neuhaus challenges the term—half of which works, and half of which doesn't. Two long galleries each sport a giant futon resting on a platform. The first bed is

EVER MEUEN

THEY FINALLY FOUND AN ANSWER TO OVERCROWDED PRISONS. SMALLER PRISONERS.

How small? In Massachusetts it's 14 years old. In Oregon it's 12. Wisconsin, 10. And in some states, there is no age minimum. This is the result of a new "tough on crime" attitude towards juvenile crime. An attitude that encourages individual states to prosecute young children as adults and incarcerate them in adult prisons. These new practices are destroying a century-old system that protects children from contact with adult prisoners.

It is also unfair in that it is minorities that are being targeted. Three out of four youths admitted to adult courts are children of color, despite the fact that most juvenile crimes are committed by whites. Everyday, more and more prosecutors are moving young offenders into the adult court system without any regard to the child's age or circumstance.

One example is Anthony Laster. A mentally disabled 15-year-old who stole \$2 from a classmate for food. He was charged as an adult on counts of strong-arm robbery and extortion, which is punishable by a sentence of 30 years to life.

These children are small and vulnerable, and in adult prisons they are the constant victims of

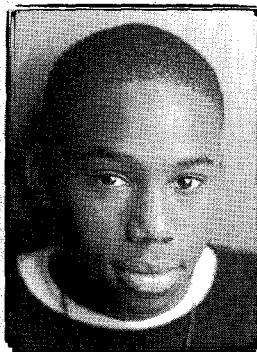
rape and violence. One case in Idaho: a 17-year-old boy was jailed for not paying \$73 in traffic fines. In the short time he was imprisoned, he was tortured and murdered by adult prisoners.

Another tragedy occurred in Texas. A teenage boy was sent to an adult prison where he was

repeatedly raped and beaten by adult inmates. After writing his father, telling him that he was no longer able to tolerate the abuse, he hung himself in his cell. In 1994 alone, 45 children met their deaths in adult prisons, and to this date, the number continues to climb as over 18,000 children are incarcerated annually.

It's been proven that these children are more likely to be physically and sexually abused in adult prisons and are more likely to continue committing crimes after their release.

These harsh laws are not the answer. Not when juvenile crime has been decreasing for the last six years. These laws are unjust and desperately need to be reconsidered. It's wrong to imprison children with adult criminals. Why? The answer is simple. Because they're children. Please support the ACLU.



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Doris Lessing

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE FIFTH CHILD

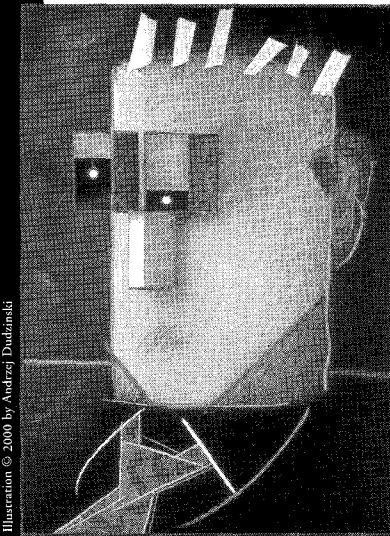


Illustration © 2000 by Andrzej Dudzinski

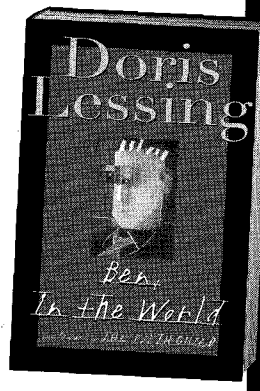
*Ben,
In the World*

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—*New York Times Book Review*

"Here is a work of great imagination."

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studded with fifty-eight small Walkmans, installed along its perimeter, each playing a different work, identified by label. Despite the seemingly arbitrary curatorial selection—ranging from composers Alvin Lucier and Paul de Marinis to the Japanese girl group Cibo Matto and the artist Vito Acconci—lolling and listening is a satisfying experience. But at the second bed, the sound is transmitted into the room at large, so there's no way to identify the piece you're listening to (unless you somehow find the wee button on the stereo, the pressing of which will display the artist's name). But on the whole, it's nice to be reminded, as Loudon Wainwright sings in one selection, that a bed can be "more than just one thing. It's garden, boat, and boxing ring." Through Oct. 1. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

LAURENT DE BRUNHOFF

Twelve years old when his father, Jean, died, de Brunhoff *filis* waited barely a decade before taking up the Babar saga, in 1946. Since then he has written and illustrated more than thirty-five elephantine adventures, all remarkably faithful to the gentle spirit of the originals. The latest installment, "Babar and the Succotash Bird," isn't a stylistic departure. What's fresh is its presentation here, with all twenty-five watercolor pages displayed in sequence. Their tranquil, orderly draftsmanship is a delight. It would have been still more delightful to get a glimpse of Babar on the drafting board, in preparatory sketches. Through Sept. 30. (Mary Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 397-0669.)

AMADEO DE SOUZA CARDOSO

An exhilarating retrospective of a little-known Portuguese artist who worked on and off in Paris from 1906 until his death from influenza, in 1918, at the age of thirty. The show reveals a pioneering modernist painter who was also a gifted draftsman—witness the jaunty, Futurist-inspired "Movement, circa 1912," a streetscape with automobiles, cycles, and a horse-drawn carriage careening at a breakneck pace, trailed by an elegant pair of greyhounds. Souza Cardoso created one of the century's earliest abstract paintings (a work from 1913, included here), but it's his flirtation with Cubism (his works in this vein presage both Robert Delauney and Marsden Hartley) which earns his place in art history. A hidden treasure. Through Sept. 16. (AXA Gallery, 787 Seventh Ave., at 52nd St. 554-4731.)

"THE POETIC LANDSCAPE"

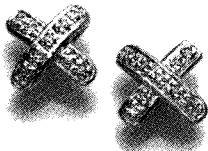
The highlight of this otherwise listless group show is a face-off between Maureen Gallace and Alex Katz. It's not a fair contest, of course, but it's fascinating to see how much Katz's small (and seldom exhibited) preliminary sketches resemble Gallace's fey Cape Codscapes. Both are deft, casual, and defiantly picturesque. When it comes to color, however, Katz's studies are all bright, sweet luminosity. Gallace, by contrast, seems to be painting with meringue and parsley. Also noteworthy is a bizarre, Wagnerian gouache by Anselm Kiefer. Among so many placid vistas, his tumbling tanks and flames offer a welcome dose of carnage. Through Sept. 12. (Barbara Mathes, 41 E. 57th St. 752-5135.)

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

"TANGKAS"

With its grimacing deities surrounded by levitating bodhisattvas and gorgeous, flamelike emanations, Tibetan Buddhist art is about as far from the sober tranquility of its Zen cousin as any art form on the planet. Where else can you find the "jewel-vomiting mongoose," not to mention aerial coitus, a standard motif? Often, the most ferocious im-

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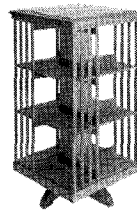
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Robert Polidori's 1987 "Living Room, 642 East 14th Street, Apartment 3, New York City," at Pace/MacGill.

ages are the most hypnotically opulent. "Inner Yama" (a sort of death-wish deity), from the eighteenth century, rivals Bosch for demonic high spirits. All of the sixty tangkas (tempera paintings) and bronzes on view come from the Tibet House's Repatriation Collection, which was founded in 1992 and is intended to be returned, eventually, to a liberated homeland. Through Sept. 22. (22 W. 15th St. 807-0563.)

GALLERIES-DOWNTOWN

VANESSA BEECROFT

Last spring, Beecroft marshalled a group of Navy Seals to march onto the deck of the U.S.S. Intrepid and stand spotlit at attention for ninety minutes while she documented the proceedings. Her current show displays photographs and videos of the performance she called "The Silent Service." Deitch Projects' newly renovated, high-ceilinged second space on Wooster, entirely open to the street and light on one end, makes a perfect showcase for Beecroft's large-format, high-gloss portraits of the men; they hang high enough on the walls that you have to look up at them and strain for eye contact. The videos are shown in a small, unmarked room by the front door and in the basement, and they're livelier than the photos suggest—balance falters, eyes wander, Adam's apples bob. Through Sept. 16. (Deitch Projects, 18 Wooster St. 343-7300.)

SUSAN LEOPOLD

Set into a subway platform wall, "Waterway" offers a view into a seductively gloomy architectural space, inspired by the canal system of early Man-

hattan. Leopold opened a pair of existing windows to offer a view through to an unused storage area that she transformed; passersby can now peer into mirrored galleries that meander in several directions through miniature archways while light shines up from the rippling aqua-blue floor she installed there. The effect recalls Piranesi and de Chirico, filtered through memories of seventies night clubs. Through April, 2001. (At the downtown platform of the Franklin Street stop on the 1 and 9 trains.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

ROBERT POLIDORI

This set of large color prints—some as big as fifty by seventy inches—spans a decade of architectural photography, and includes some recent assignments for this magazine. In the aftermath of the revolution in Lebanon, Polidori studies bullet-hole constellations on a wall; in France, he looks in on renovations at Versailles; and, in New York, he observes the colorful mess of a claustrophobic East Village apartment. His interiors and exteriors are at once historic documents and aesthetic experiences, in the tradition of Eugène Atget and Joel Sternfeld. Opening Sept. 7. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999.)

MELVIN SOKOLSKY

From 1959 to 1970, Melvin Sokolsky worked for *Harper's Bazaar*, where he was known for dressing up his fashion shoots with Surrealist stunts—models were made to fly in bubbles hovering over the streets of Paris, and references to Escher and Magritte abounded. Even when he stopped stag-

ing spectacles, his supersaturated colors and deadpan compositions accentuated the far-out: in his simplest shots, women are frozen in tortured poses, their glassy-eyed cool defining the sixties even more than their hairdos. Opening Sept. 8. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223.)

WILHELM VON GLOEDEN

Von Gloeden (1856-1931) was born into the Prussian nobility but moved to Taormina, Sicily, before launching his artistic career. In this warmer climate and more relaxed society, the Baron's disabling respiratory problems eased and his nervous condition (which the gallery calls "psychological distress experienced as a pederast unable to indulge his erotic fantasies") improved. The pictures on show here, taken between 1878 and 1914, are largely of nude and partially clothed young men, one in Pan's horns and not much else, others half-draped in Grecian-style togas. Most figures are identified simply as "Sicilian Youth," including the lone young woman posed as the Virgin, perhaps a companion to a better-known image not on show here: the Baron's own self-portrait as Christ. Through Sept. 9. (Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. 223-1059.)

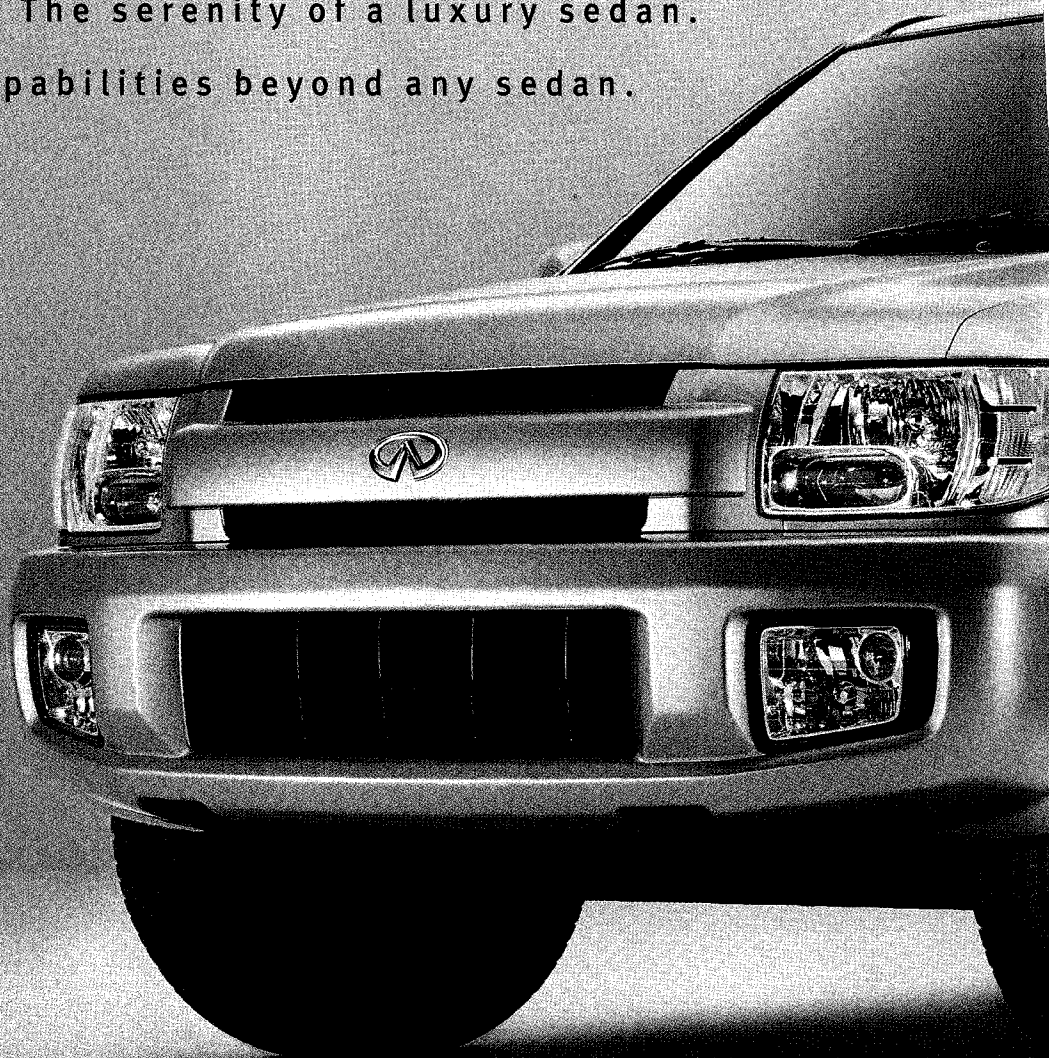
"OTRAS COSAS"

This group show presents a circle of early-twentieth-century Mexican abstract photographers. Rosa Covarrubias's photograms are playful but unremarkable, while Emilio Amoro's have a modernist aesthetic—his 1932 "Untitled (Abstract)" shows a mix of organic forms being overtaken by urban geometry. Elsewhere, Agustín Jiménez looks at patterns in cactus spines, and Lola Alvarez Bravo captures impressionistic landscapes; both are overshadowed by the latter's onetime husband, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, the best-known artist in

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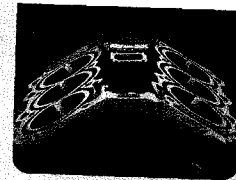
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the show. His 1926 "Juegos de Papel (Paper Games)" gives a tabletop still-life such mass and movement that it becomes a piece of architecture in its own right. Through Oct. 10. (Mexican Cultural Institute, 27 E. 39th St. 217-6422.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY

1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (860-1777)—"A Durable Memento" presents daguerreotypes of places (Connecticut, Liberia) and people (John Brown) taken by Augustus Washington, the son of a former slave. Through Sept. 24. "Positions in the Life World" surveys Martha Rossler's photos and videos, including such classics as her 1975 "Semiotics of the Kitchen." Through Oct. 1. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)



The Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio, opening the season at the 92nd Street Y.

Short List

JOEL MEYEROWITZ

Meyerowitz, 580 Broadway. 625-3434. Opening Sept. 8.

WILHELM VON GLOEDEN

Wessel and O'Connor, 242 W. 26th St. 242-8811. Open Sundays. Opening Sept. 8.

"CAPTURE THE MOMENT"

Newseum, 580 Madison Ave. 317-7503. Through Sept. 23.

See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, both branches of the Whitney Museum, and the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

CLASSICAL MUSIC OPERA

"THE TENDER LAND"

Cal Stewart Kellogg directs a concert performance of Copland's 1954 opera, which is based on James Agee's "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men." (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Sept. 7 at 8.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA

The company's season begins with its first performance in more than a quarter of a century of Donizetti's "Roberto Devereux," in a new production directed by Mark Lamos. Reviving this work at City Opera is like reassigning Mickey Mantle's uniform number: "Roberto Devereux" was so completely identified with Beverly Sills, the company's house diva in the sixties and seventies, that it has languished as more or less off limits ever since. Many splendid singers have crossed the stage, but no soprano of remotely the same stature made the house her home until Lauren Flanigan emerged as the company's resident prima donna over the past decade. Apart from that (and from the fact that, like Sills, she has achieved her particular stardom without the Met's benediction), Flanigan has little in common with Sills; her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth in this tale of court intrigue is likely to stress dramatic power over the sparkling coloratura vocalism for which her predecessor was renowned. Also in the cast are mezzo-soprano Jane Dutton, tenor Fernando de la Mora, and baritone Mark Delavan. George Manahan conducts. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Sept. 12 at 6:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUS

NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY

This year, the nation of Brazil is celebrating the quinqucentenary of first European contact, an anniversary that seems to have been somewhat obscured by international millennial observations. Although Spaniards had been sailing up and down the coast for a few years, it was Pedro Álvares Cabral who seems to have first put in to port, in April of 1500, in the land he would claim for the Portuguese crown. Brazil remained a Portuguese colony until September 7, 1822; this concert marks a double celebration of the year of its discovery by Europeans and its Independence Day. Brazil's most famous composer, Heitor Villa-Lobos, is represented by two works—the Prelude from his "Bachianas Brasileiras" No. 4 and his Suite No. 2—and the program also includes the Overture to Carlos Gomes's 1873 opera "Fosca" and the 1934 "Fantasia Brasileira" No. 3 for Piano and Orchestra by Francisco Mignone (a Villa-Lobos contemporary much given to quoting folk music), with Linda Bustani as the soloist. Nelson Nirenberg conducts. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Sept. 7 at 8:30.)

NEW YORK VIRTUOSI CHAMBER SYMPHONY

Kenneth Klein conducts Vivaldi's Concerto in B Minor for Four Violins (Op. 3, No. 10), Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, and Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos, with the last featuring the duo-piano team of Theo Lieven and Sergio Tiempo. Mr. Lieven has had an interesting career outside the concert hall. In 1975 he founded the company that would grow into Vobis Microcomputer AG, one of Europe's largest retailers of personal computers. In 1992 he helped found the International Piano Foundation, through which promising young pianists attend master classes with eminent musicians on the shore of Lake Como. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Sept. 8 at 8.)

"SUNDAYS ON THE ISLAND"

Sixteen musicians gather in the parlor of a bed-and-breakfast on City Island for a program of violin concertos by Bach. The Canadian violinist Lara St. John is featured in the solo concertos in A Minor and E Major, and she joins forces with her brother, Scott St. John, for the Double Violin Concerto in D Minor. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. Sept. 10 at noon.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY

The conductor Jens Nygaard has put together another season of almost weekly concerts in which familiar masterworks rub elbows with tantalizing curiosities. The opening program includes not only Brahms's Violin Concerto (featuring Dmitri Berlinsky) but also the so-called "Jena" Symphony, a rather infamous piece that almost never gets an airing. It takes its name from the city where it was discovered, in 1909, by a musicologist whose heart must have skipped a few beats when he saw the inscription "par Louis van Beethoven" inscribed on two of the instrumental parts. He published it as a lost Beethoven work, but discriminating scholars had already voiced plenty of doubts even before two other copies of the piece surfaced, both clearly ascribed to Friedrich Witt, a contemporary of Beethoven's. In fact, it's hardly even by Witt, since it's really little more than a cut-and-paste potpourri of moments from the works of Haydn. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Sept. 11 at 2 and 7 and Sept. 12 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

RECITALS

NEW YORK VOCAL ARTS ENSEMBLE

Trinity Church's summer salute to Mozart reaches its finale, as pianist Raymond Beagle leads his four singer colleagues and three guest instrumentalists in songs and chamber works. (Broadway at Wall St. Sept. 7 at 1. No tickets necessary.)

GWENDOLYN TOTH

The director of both the Artek Ensemble and the music program of St. Francis of Assisi Church, Ms. Toth regularly performs on a variety of historical keyboard instruments. Her most recent passion is the lautenwerk, an instrument that is essentially a harpsichord with gut and brass strings and an accordingly veiled timbre. She launches the new season of her church's free forty-minute, lunchtime concerts with lautenwerk renditions of two works by Bach, his "Overture in the French Style" and his Partita No. 6. (135 W. 31st St. Sept. 7 at 1:15. No tickets necessary.)

BARGEMUSIC

Sept. 7-8 at 7:30: The pianist Diane Walsh performs Bach's D-Minor Partita, Ida Levin joins her for Beethoven's Violin Sonata in G Major (Op. 96), and cellist David Soyer (soon to leave the Guarneri String Quartet) completes the ensemble for Dvořák's Piano Trio in F Minor. ♦ Sept. 9 at 7:30 and Sept. 10 at 4: The violinist Carmit Zori, the violist Robert Rinehart, the cellist Fred Sherry, and the pianist Cynthia Raim team up for a program comprising Beethoven's F-Major Piano Sonata (Op. 54), Haydn's D-Minor Piano Trio, and Schumann's Piano Quartet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

A BOW TO JENNY LIND

Following her P. T. Barnum-produced American tour, from 1850 to 1852, the "Swedish Nightingale" became an icon of Victorian culture in America, even though she never set foot in the country again. The New-York Historical Society has mounted an exhibition to mark the sesquicentennial of her arrival in America and has joined with several other cultural institutions to create a mini-festival around town. Two public programs take place this week. Sept. 10 at 2: Sopranos Charlotte Philley and Deborah Saverance perform songs from Lind's repertoire, and author and theatre director F. Paul Driscoll offers a lecture on Lind, with period readings interspersed. (Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. No tickets needed beyond museum admission. For reservations, which

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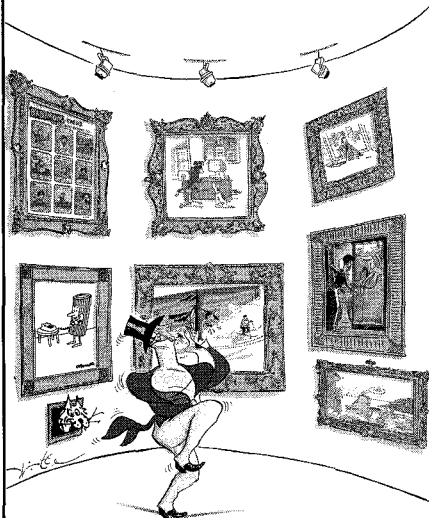
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are required, call 534-1672, ext. 257.) ♦ Sept. 11 at noon: An afternoon of music and readings near Castle Clinton, the site of Lind's historic debut. (Battery Park. No tickets necessary.)

AN EVENING WITH PHILIP GLASS

The composer oversees a performance of excerpts from his new Symphony No. 5 and shares his insights on the piece. (Guggenheim Museum Auditorium, Fifth Ave., at 89th St. 423-3587. Sept. 11 at 8.)

AMERICAN STRING QUARTET

This foursome has been in residence at the Manhattan School of Music for the past sixteen years, during which time they have coached such ensembles as the Arcata and Elsner Quartets toward full-fledged careers. As part of their responsibilities, the Americans also offer several concerts at the conservatory every season. This year's series begins with their readings of Haydn's Quartet in F Minor (Op. 20, No. 5), Schoenberg's Quartet No. 2 (with soprano Dana Hanchard, a Manhattan School alumna, singing the Stefan Georg poems Schoenberg worked into the third and fourth movements), and Beethoven's Quartet in F Major (Op. 50, No. 1). (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802, ext. 528. Sept. 11 at 8.)

KALICHSTEIN-LAREDO-ROBINSON TRIO

The classical-music programs of the 92nd Street Y rouse from their summer slumber with two classic piano trios—Mozart's in B-Flat Major and Brahms's in B Major—plus a recent composition by Richard Danielpour: "A Child's Reliquary," also for piano trio, which was co-commissioned by the Y. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Sept. 12-13 at 8.)

OUT OF TOWN

MUSIC MOUNTAIN

Final concerts of the season. Sept. 8 at 8: The Original Salty Dogs Jazz Band. ♦ Sept. 9 at 7:30: A wide-ranging benefit evening of readings and musical performances. ♦ Sept. 10 at 3: The flutist John Solum, a Music Mountain favorite who has played at the festival in each of the past fourteen years, leads the Hanoverian Ensemble in an all-Vivaldi concert. (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

GETTING STRUNG ALONG

The Henson International Festival of Puppet Theatre brings twenty-six companies from around the world to town starting Sept. 6. The two-and-a-half-week affair features such literary material as a version of Oscar Wilde's "Salome," presented by the performance artist Hanne Tierney and a cast made of fabric, aluminum, and rubber tubing; the Redmoon Theatre's take on Victor Hugo's "The Hunchback of Notre Dame"; and Michael Sommers's meditation on Faust. The festival's strength is in its experimental companies, and other highlights include England's Faulty Optic company (offering a piece titled "Snuffhouse Dustlouse"), German puppeteer Albrecht Roser ("Gustaf and His Ensemble"), and France's Compagnie Philippe Genty ("Stowaways"). (For information about venues and dates, call 439-7556 or visit www.hensonfestival.org.)

READINGS

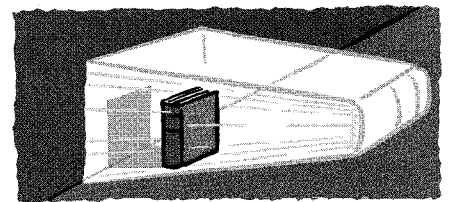
Sept. 10 at 7:30: By Mary Morris, from her novel "Acts of God," and by Whit Stillman, from his novel, "The Last Days of Disco." (Temple Bar, 332 Lafayette St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Sept. 11 at 7: By Doris Lessing, from her novel "Ben, in the World." (Fales Library, New York University, 70 Washington Sq. S. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Sept. 12 at 7: By poets Billy Collins and Sophie Cabot Black. (Russian Samovar, 256 W. 52nd St. Tickets at the door.)

TOUR

Sept. 12 at 9: Floriculturist Rose Edinger leads a behind-the-scenes stroll through Manhattan's wholesale flower district, in the West Twenties. For more information, call 757-0915, ext. 200.

BOOK CURRENTS

Let Us Now Praise Famous Books



With summer a fading memory, devoted readers can set down their beach books and pick up more demanding volumes: not just the great books, but new books about the great books. In **HOW TO READ AND WHY** (Scribner), the Shakespearean scholar Harold Bloom pays tribute to the ability of authors to produce in readers a kind of rapture that he terms the "reader's Sublime." As Bloom writes, "A great novelist, even when as sophisticated as Austen or Henry James, shares with Dickens the power to make us read as if we could be children again." Echoing Emerson, Bloom says that this power grows from a writer's genius in persuading the reader that "one nature wrote and the same reads."

THE BROWSER'S ECSTASY (Counterpoint), by the novelist and critic Geoffrey O'Brien, takes a more idiosyncratic stance toward literary enlightenment, finding in the written word a kind of biological life (O'Brien thinks of prose as "a wriggling mass of syntax") and suggesting that reading is so personal that "no two people dip into the same book."

The joyously magisterial **BOOK OF PREFACES** (Bloomsbury), overseen by the Scottish novelist Alasdair Gray and a pack of dedicated scholars, assembles a peacock's fan of prologues, forewords, apologies, and introductions written by famous writers about their own work: Chaucer on Chaucer, Twain on Twain, and (of course) Shaw on Shaw. While some authors use the front matter for broad literary philosophizing (Conrad, in 1897, wrote grandly that a great book "should carry its justification in every line"), others opt for politics: Daniel Defoe, attempting to keep the censors away from "Moll Flanders," pleads with readers to recognize that "there is not an ill thing mention'd but it is condemn'd . . . nor a virtuous just thing, but it carries its praise along with it."

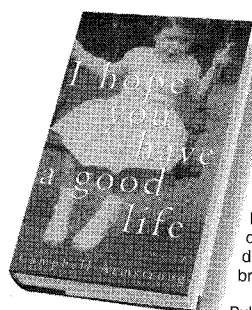
—Liesl Schilling

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

Books.

[AT BARNES & NOBLE]

Read It Like It Is



I HOPE YOU HAVE A GOOD LIFE

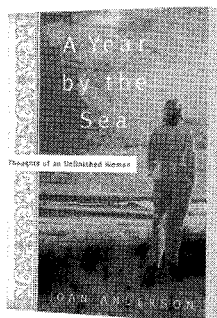
by Campbell Armstrong

In this heartbreaking memoir, the lives of two extraordinary women intersect after forty-two years—a reunion of mother and daughter. The older woman—suffering from lung cancer—is shocked to receive a letter from the daughter she was forced to give away years earlier, who is also battling cancer. Now cramming a lifetime's worth of caring into a few short months, the women discover deep family bonds that cannot be broken. (Crown)

Pub. Price: \$22.00

Discount 20%

Our Price: \$17.60



A YEAR BY THE SEA

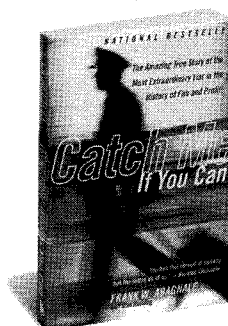
by Joan Anderson

After her children are grown, the author arrives at the sudden realization that by having ignored her own needs and dreams in favor of her family, she neglected to nurture herself and devise fulfilling goals for her future. In a bid to reinvent her life, she retreats to a cottage on Cape Cod and embarks on a journey of self-discovery. There she finds strength to revitalize herself and tap her hidden potential. (Broadway)

Pub. Price: \$12.95

Discount 20%

Our Price: \$10.36



CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

by Frank W. Abagnale

Before his twenty-first birthday, thanks to a short but notorious criminal career, Frank Abagnale became known as one of the most wanted and daring con men, forgers, imposters, and escape artists in history. In this entertaining, bestselling true story, "The Skywayman" tells the amazing tale of his devious exploits until he was confronted by the law. Ingenious and irresistible, this charming account will both captivate and titillate. (Broadway)

Pub. Price: \$14.00

Discount 20%

Our Price: \$11.20

THE KNOX BROTHERS

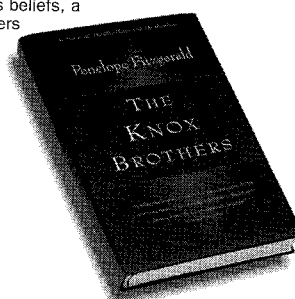
by Penelope Fitzgerald

In this heartfelt biography of her late, beloved father and his three brothers, the bestselling author of *The Blue Flower* explores the lives and bonds of four remarkable men. In spite of tensions between family loyalties and their vastly different careers and religious beliefs, a loving portrait emerges of the brothers who remained exceptionally close and faithful to each other. (Counterpoint)

Pub. Price: \$26.00

Discount 20%

Our Price: \$20.80



CHANGE ME INTO ZEUS'S DAUGHTER

by Barbara Robinette Moss

This infinitely moving, powerful tale is culled from the oppressive, bittersweet memories of one woman whose poverty-stricken childhood was governed by an alcoholic father. Captured here is her search for joy, compassion and beauty in a world beyond that which she has always known. (Scribner)

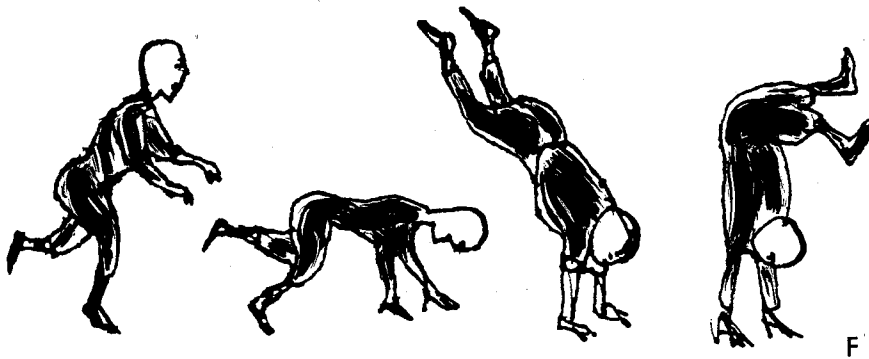
Pub. Price: \$24.00

Discount 20%

Our Price: \$19.20

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MOVIES OPENING

CLOUDS

A drama about a scientist's quest for the meaning of life. With Michael Patrick Gaffney and Jennifer Jordan Day. Directed by Don Thompson. Opening Sept. 8.

IT ALL STARTS TODAY

The story of a dedicated nursery-school teacher (Philippe Torreton) who works in an economically depressed town in northern France. Directed by Bertrand Tavernier. In French. Opening Sept. 8. (Cinema Village.)

NURSE BETTY

Reviewed this week in *The Current Cinema*. Opening Sept. 8.

POLA X

Léos Carax directed this adaptation of the Herman Melville novel "Pierre, or the Ambiguities" in which a novelist (Guillaume Depardieu) is haunted by a vision of an unknown woman. With Catherine Deneuve. In French. Opening Sept. 8.

SOLAS

A mother attempts to help her wayward, pregnant daughter, in this family drama from Spain. Directed by Benito Zambrano. In Spanish. Opening Sept. 8.

THIS IS SPINAL TAP

A rerelease of the 1984 mockumentary directed by Rob Reiner, with additional footage and outtakes. Opening Sept. 8.

TURN IT UP

Pras of the Fugees plays a young rapper on the rise in this semiautobiographical drama. With Ja Rule, Lauryn Hill, and Vondie Curtis-Hall. Opening Sept. 6.

THE WATCHER

Keanu Reeves as a serial killer; James Spader as the detective tracking him down. Directed by Joe Charbanic. Opening Sept. 8.

THE WAY OF THE GUN

Two career criminals kidnap a surrogate mother, in this thriller directed by Christopher McQuarrie, the screenwriter of "The Usual Suspects." With Ryan Phillippe, Benicio Del Toro, and Taye Diggs. Opening Sept. 8.

FILM NOTES

BITTERSWEET MOTEL

The members of the popular, jam-happy band Phish in a music documentary that's the polar opposite of "Gimme Shelter." While that film has a young, lusty Mick Jagger and a violent finale at Altamont, this one ends with Trey Anastasio, a bespectacled guitar wizard, presiding over a peaceful three-day concert in Limestone, Maine. A new rock-star sensibility is celebrated here—call it the triumph of the dorks. Anastasio, in particular, cultivates an anti-celebrity, and he champions suburban adolescence as an unrecognized wellspring of American music. It's too bad the witty, self-aware asides are so few. As the film trips along from venue to venue, the band seems to close in on itself, and decide, characteristically, to let its music do all the talking.—*Michael Agger* (Cinema Village.)

BRING IT ON

A hyperkinetic teen movie that flirts with some interesting ideas about race, hip-hop, and the overblown world of competitive cheering but decides to smile and high-kick instead. The pert-mouthed Kirsten Dunst, captain of a successful suburban California squad, is crushed when she discovers that her team's sultry dance routines were stolen from an all-black squad from East Compton—a form of whitewashing which has a long tradition, from Pat Boone to Vanilla Ice. Without a real showdown, the film merely bounces along with a series of peppy but pointless scenes of young actresses dancing in halter tops.—*M.A.* (Chelsea West, East 86th Street Cinema, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Olympia I and II, and Union Square.)

CECIL B. DEMENTED

The new John Waters picture takes its place in the long and semi-honorable tradition of Hollywood self-scorn. The title character is an underground movie director (Stephen Dorff) dedicated to the demolition of standard studio pap. Surrounded by his gang of guerrilla technicians, he kidnaps a star (Melanie Griffith) and forces her to play the lead in his latest slice of zero-budget decadence. As Cecil and his crew attack multiplexes and movie sets, it's never quite clear where they or Waters are pointing their radical rage: at the process of filmmaking, at the national theatre chains, or at those citizens of a free America who exercise their right to watch baloney.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 8/21 & 8/28/00.) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinema, Coronet Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

THE CELL

A man's intestines twirled around a golden spit; the pulsating organs of a dissected horse encased in glass; dead women pieced together as mechanical dolls—these are just some of the tableaux encountered by Jennifer Lopez, who plays a child psychologist who travels, via experimental drug, into the mind of a serial killer. The plot doesn't make much sense, but the imagery is arresting. The director, Tarsem Singh, made his name in music videos, and his feature debut is full of intense visual trickery; he relies on surreal contrasts (snowflakes falling on a sunlit desert) and clever cuts (from pouring milk to a body drenched in bleach). Since most of the film takes place inside a psychopath's mind, the normal, comforting conventions of suspense don't apply.—*M.A.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.)

DAYS OF HEAVEN

Terrence Malick wrote and directed this story of adultery, set principally in the wheat fields of the Texas panhandle just before America entered the First World War. It's both a nostalgic and an anti-nostalgic vision of the American past. The landscapes are vast and lonely, with the space in the images strained and the figures tilted; the characters are monosyllabic—near-mute. Richard Gere plays Bill, who works in a blast furnace in Chicago; he gets into a brawl with the foreman and heads south, taking his girl, Abby (Brooke Adams), and his twelve-year-old sister, Linda (Linda Manz), with him. They find work in the fields of a wealthy young farmer (Sam Shepard), who falls in love with Abby. Shot by Nestor Almendros, with additional photography by Haskel Wexler, the film is

a series of pictorial effects—some of them, such as a train passing over a lacework bridge, extraordinary—but the overpowering images seem unrelated, pieced together. The movie suffers from too many touches, too many ideas that don't grow out of anything organic. It's an epic pastiche.—*Pauline Kael* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Sept. 9-10.)

GIMME SHELTER

The facts of the Altamont debacle are well known: Hell's Angels, hired as security by the Rolling Stones for a free concert at a Bay Area speedway, bullied and beat their way through the audience, eventually stabbing to death a young black man named Meredith Hunter. What is less well known, perhaps, is how skillfully the Maysles Brothers' 1970 documentary builds to that horrible conclusion. In the film's opening scenes, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, and company light up Madison Square Garden with effulgent performances of "Jumpin' Jack Flash" and "Satisfaction." But the Maysles undermine the triumphant mood by intercutting scenes of the Stones ensconced in a cramped editing room, reviewing rushes from Altamont (including a truly wrenching shot of Hunter's stabbing, parsed and slowed for maximum effect). The pain in Jagger's eyes as he watches the murder footage lasts only a moment before he papers over it with his strutting-cock persona, which in turn dissipates almost immediately. It is the collision of these two extremes—the Stones as erotic gods, the Stones as chastened schoolboys—which generates the film's enduring pathos.—*Ben Greenman* (Film Forum.)

GIRL ON THE BRIDGE

A waifish young woman (Vanessa Paradis) attempts to drown herself but is saved by a knife thrower (Daniel Auteuil) who persuades her to join his act, where she becomes both nerveless victim and indispensable muse. He whirls her from one fancy location to the next, living on the slim proceeds of their success and gazing with avuncular disdain upon her incessant amours. The movie promises to be as steely as the flying blades, and the knife-tossing sequences make you flinch; but the director, Patrice Leconte, seems unable to match the coolness of his heroine, and the story droops into whimsy. Still, here is your chance to study the phenomenon that is Ms. Paradis—a huge draw in France and the beloved of Johnny Depp, who sports a similar set of cheekbones. In French.—*A.L.* (Angelika Film Center and First & 62nd Cinemas.)

HOLLOW MAN

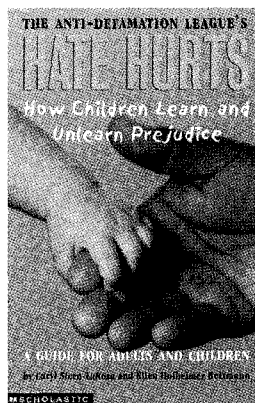
A cocky scientist named Sebastian Caine (Kevin Bacon) injects serum into his veins and becomes invisible. Does Sebastian do something cool with his new freedom, like turn losers into winners at Donald Trump's casino tables or perform mysterious good deeds and then disappear? No such luck. The director Paul Verhoeven is more literal-minded and crass: Sebastian fondles and rapes women and becomes increasingly violent, eventually stalking his colleagues (including Elisabeth Shue and Josh Brolin) in a vast underground lab. The movie has some extraordinary digital effects (when Sebastian is underwater he can just barely be seen—he looks like a well-toned jellyfish, shapely and translucent), but the plotting and dialogue function at the level of a third-rate thriller. An exhaustingly bad movie devoted to an idea that could have been great fun.—*David Denby* (8/14/00) (84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII.)

LOVE & SEX

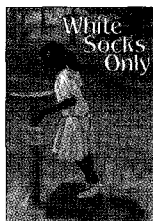
The writer-director Valerie Breiman, in her first feature, has put together an inconsequential but charming romantic comedy starring the long-stemmed, unpretentious beauty Famke Janssen as a Los Angeles magazine writer and Jon Favreau ("Swingers") as her boyfriend, a wisecracking, rather infantile painter. The movie offers little more than the latest forms of sexual banter, but the teasing mock crises are easy enough to take, and the two stars have a nice rhythm together. Janssen, with better material, could blossom into the next Julia Roberts; she's pretty irresistible even in this low-key stuff.—*D.D.* (Empire 25, 62nd & Broadway, and Union Square.)

Close The Book On Hate

Intolerance isn't something children are born with. It's learned. Therefore, it can be unlearned. Barnes & Noble and the Anti-Defamation League have come together to help children better understand the richness and beauty of our multicultural society. By making these books available and by encouraging parents to read and talk about them with their children, we believe we can all make a difference. Let's close the book on hate.



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THE ORIGINAL KINGS OF COMEDY

Eager to escape the constraints of television, four black comics—Steve Harvey, D. L. Hughley, Cedric the Entertainer, and Bernie Mac—began touring around the country in 1997, and Spike Lee, using lightweight video cameras, caught their act last February in Charlotte, North Carolina. The results are pretty much sensational from start to finish: you feel the warmth of a live show and the pleasure the men take in shaping the evening. Steve Harvey can be scathing in a palms-down, slightly fey style of irritated disbelief—reminiscent, in this one respect, of Jack Benny. D. L. Hughley is small and querulous; he burns with the shrill exasperation of the put-upon male. Cedric the Entertainer

42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, New York Twin, 19th Street East Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE SEVENTH SEAL

Ingmar Bergman's 1956 medieval morality play about man in search of the meaning of life is set in fourteenth-century Sweden. It's a magically powerful film—the story seems to be playing itself out in a medieval present. A knight (Max von Sydow), tormented and doubting, returns from ten wasted years in the Crusades, and Death (Bengt Ekerot) comes to claim him. Hoping to gain some revelation or obtain some knowledge before he dies, the knight challenges Death to a game of chess. As they play, the knight observes scenes of cruelty, rot,

(Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

THE TAO OF STEVE

Jenniphr Goodman's comedy is set in Santa Fe, which comes across as the capital city of slackness; apparently entire lives can be structured around the art of the Frisbee. Donal Logue plays Dex, the portly and lovable hero, as a kind of threatless John Belushi—no one is wary of him or his bulk, and women, in particular, are drawn to his bed in spite of themselves. Dex has a book-fed philosophy of successful seduction, although the movie never really shows us his technique in action. Instead, we get melting hearts as he discovers that the cool-spirited Syd (Greer Goodman) may just be the woman for him. The story strolls along with ease, picking its way carefully between the nerdish and the hip, and the soundtrack is a memorable breeze, yet you come out feeling strangely underwhelmed. When did the movies last produce a proper Casanova, with the courage of his addiction?—A.L. (8/7/00) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

THE TENANT

Set and filmed in Paris with a French-and-American cast, this 1976 movie, which concludes Roman Polanski's trilogy of evil-apartment movies (following "Repulsion" and "Rosemary's Baby"), is creepily funny and perilously misshapen. Polanski hit it about right when he wrote in his autobiography that the insanity of the gentle Polish immigrant bank clerk (played sympathetically by Polanski himself) "doesn't build gradually enough . . . his hallucinations are too startling and unexpected." The movie has its moments, though, both as a comic nightmare on the horrors of renting and a Kafkaesque farce about a personality too fragile for urban living. With Isabelle Adjani, Shelley Winters, Melvyn Douglas, and Jo Van Fleet; Polanski and Gerard Brach cowrote the script from Roland Topor's novel; cinematography by Sven Nykvist. In French.—Michael Sragow (BAM Rose Cinemas; Sept. 10.)

WHIPPED

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

THE WIND WILL CARRY US

A beautiful but limited exercise in aesthetic formalism from the Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami. An engineer from Teheran (Behzad Dourani) arrives in a small mountain village in order to record some sort of ritual that depends on the death of an old lady. But the old woman, whom we never see, refuses to die, and the engineer waits and waits and begins to question his life. He becomes friends with a little boy, and converses with a variety of people in town, some of whom are also out of sight. He drives again and again to a hilltop to get a clear signal for his cell phone so he can call Teheran and make small talk. The picture has a mournful, slow rhythm, rather like that of prayer or a stately ballad, and clearly Kiarostami is saying something about the value of putting down roots versus modern restlessness. But when life is simplified this way and then arranged into a pattern, it yields meaning without much struggle. However handsome the movie, one may feel the game has been rigged. In Farsi.—D.D. (8/14/00) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

X-MEN

The most beautiful, strange, and exciting comic-book movie since the original "Batman." The world, it seems, is filled with mutants—quirks of evolution and lost souls who band together for comfort and understanding. Feared by the regular humans, the mutants, according to Magneto (Sir Ian McKellen), will never be accepted, and since they are superior he believes they should either destroy the rest of humanity or supplant it. He's been engaged in a long quarrel about this with Professor Xavier (Patrick Stewart), a soft-spoken, wheelchair-bound sage with empathic powers. The film combines the fear of aliens invading us (an old sci-fi trope) with a spectacular war of the gods. The director, Bryan Singer, builds the characters and then lets the action flow from their special physical skills.—D.D. (7/24/00) (Chelsea

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER



Opening September 8, "Pola X," directed by Léos Carax.

does soft-bellied dance steps and offers candid imitations of ordinary folks. Bernie Mac, tall, handsome, stentorian, and fearless, says he's past his prime in bed; we don't believe him for a minute, but it's a gracious admission of mortality. Most of the jokes are about sex and family and work, and about shame, too—the humiliations too deep for ordinary people to admit. Among other things, the movie is a tender-dirty love song to women, who, Harvey says, have been scandalously neglected by the hip-hop performers.—D.D. (84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE REPLACEMENTS

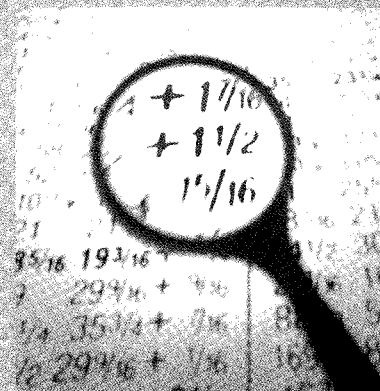
N.F.L. commentator John Madden has the best lines in this sports comedy, directed by Howard Deutch, which isn't so much a movie as a series of sports bloopers set to music, plus lots of dreamy closeups. As the man picked to mold a group of scab players during a strike, Gene Hackman reaches into his acting closet and pulls out his coach's suit, but even he can't suppress a smirk at the weightless dialogue he's obliged to deliver. Keanu Reeves plays quarterback, and he and his motley crew of teammates are funny in all the generic ways.—M.A. (East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex,

and suffering which suggest the tortures and iniquity Ivan Karamazov described to Alyosha. The images and the omens are medieval, but the modern erotic and psychological insights add tension, and in some cases, as in the burning of the child-witch (Maud Hansson), exorcism. The actors' faces, the aura of magic, the ambiguities, and the riddle at the heart of the film all contribute to its stature. In Swedish.—P.K. (Film Forum; Sept. 8-9.)

SPACE COWBOYS

Clint Eastwood builds a full-scale space-adventure movie around a gimmick. Four aging mavericks (Eastwood, James Garner, Donald Sutherland, and Tommy Lee Jones), Air Force hot shots from the fifties who never made it to outer space, get called into service by NASA on a special mission. It might have been a more graceful movie if Eastwood and the screenwriters, Ken Kaufman and Howard Klausner, had not joked about the men's age in every scene (James Garner is the only one who actually looks his age). Some of the hostility the men encounter (from young astronauts, for instance) is entirely unconvincing, and Eastwood's direction is a little creaky. But there are plenty of affecting and engagingly sentimental moments, many courtesy of Jones. As a widower still in love with his wife, he creeps up on the audience's emotions in his peculiarly offhand way and steals the show.—D.D.

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West, Empire 25, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, Village East Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

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AN AFFAIR OF LOVE

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Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.

THE BALLAD OF RAMBLIN' JACK

Empire 25 and Waverly 1 and 2.

JESUS' SON

Cinema Village and The Screening Room.

ORFEU

BAM Rose Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Quad Cinema.

PLACE VENDÔME

Paris.

RIFI

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

SAVING GRACE

Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, East 85th Street, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Union Square.

STEAL THIS MOVIE! (8/21 & 8/28/00)

Empire 25.

SUNSHINE (7/17/00)

Empire 25 and First & 62nd.

84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St. Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St. Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St. 42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.

Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.

Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.

Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.

New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.

19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.

Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.

Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.

Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.

Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.

The Screening Room, 54 Varick St.

(334-2100).

72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.

64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.

State, Broadway at 45th St.

Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.

Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.

Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.

Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.

Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

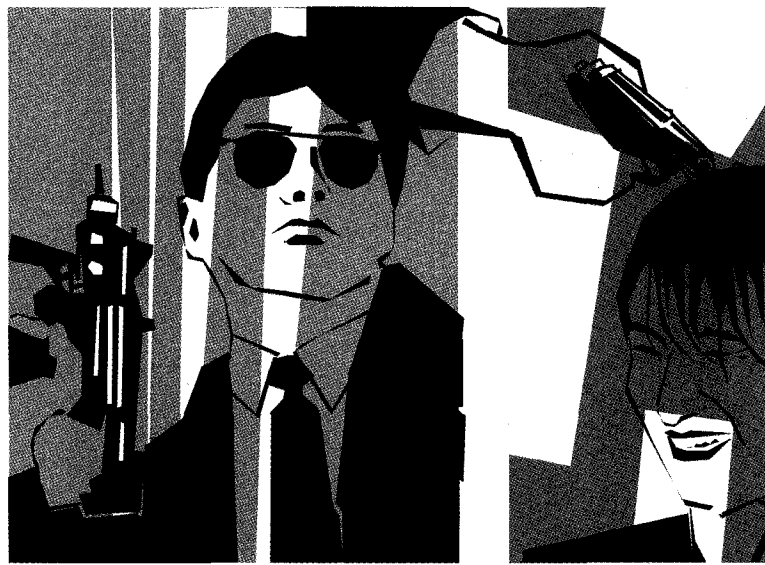
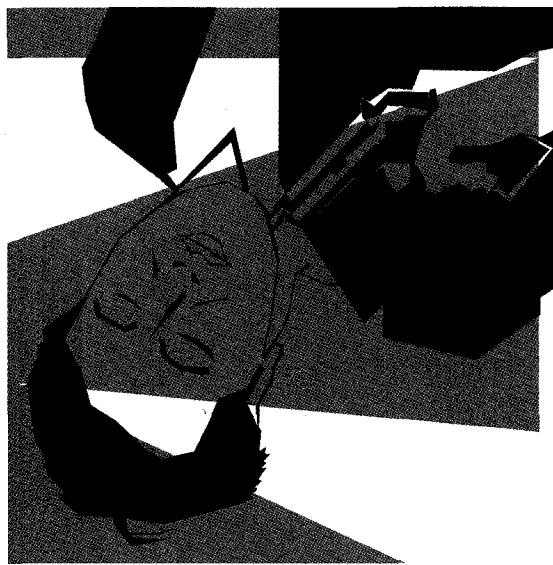
2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "The Tenant" (†). ♦ Sept. 11 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Institute Benjamenta" (1995, Stephen and Timothy Quay). ♦ Sept. 12 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Written on the Wind" (1956, Douglas Sirk).

FILM FORUM

W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through Sept. 14: "The Golden Age of Foreign Film." Sept. 6: "Rocco and His Brothers" (1960, Luchino Visconti; in Italian). ♦ Sept. 7: "La Ronde" (1950, Max Ophüls; in French) and "The Golden Coach" (1952, Jean Renoir; in French). ♦ Sept. 8-9: "The Seventh Seal" (†) and "Wild Strawberries" (1957, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish). ♦ Sept. 10: "Beauty and the Beast" (1946, Jean Cocteau; in French) and "Orpheus" (1949, Cocteau; in French). ♦ Sept. 11: "Les Bonnes Femmes" (1960, Claude Chabrol; in French) and "The Soft Skin" (1964, François Truffaut; in French). ♦ Sept. 12: "Kanal" (1956, Andrzej Wajda; in Polish) and "Ashes and Diamonds" (1958, Wajda; in Polish).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Sept. 7 at 2:30 and Sept. 8 at 6: "The Penalty" (1920, Wallace Worsley). ♦ Sept. 7 at 6 and Sept. 9 at 5: "The Chechahcos" (1924, Lewis H. Moomaw). ♦ Sept. 8 at 3: "Caught" (1949, Max Ophüls). ♦ Sept. 8 at 6: "The Strange Woman" (1946, Edgar Ulmer). ♦ Sept. 8 at 8 and Sept. 9 at 2: "Moana" (1926, Robert Flaherty). ♦ Sept. 9 at 5: Short films from the West Coast avant-garde, 1947-48. ♦ Sept. 10 at 2: "Dreams That Money Can Buy" (1948, Hans Richter). ♦ Sept. 10 at 5 and Sept. 11 at 2:30: The home movies of Groucho Marx, 1933-39.



The Hong Kong action films of John Woo, screening Saturdays in September at BAM Rose Cinemas.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
ASTOR Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Beckman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—
"I've Seen Another World: The Films of Terrence Malick." Sept. 9 at 2: "Badlands" (1973). ♦ Sept. 9 at 4 and Sept. 10 at 1:30: "Days of Heaven" (†). ♦ Sept. 10 at 3:30: "The Thin Red Line" (1998). ♦ Classic movies. Sept. 9-10 at 6:30: "The Devil, Probably" (1977, Robert Bresson; in French).
BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770)—
Sept. 6 at 7 and 9:30: "The Marrying Kind" (1952, George Cukor). ♦ Sept. 7: "Taking Off" (1971, Milos Forman). ♦ Sept. 8 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "The Graduate" (1967, Mike Nichols). ♦ Sept. 9 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Hard Boiled" (1992, John Woo; in Cantonese). ♦ Sept. 10 at

THE SCREENING ROOM

54 Varick St. (334-2100)—Sept. 8-12: Episodes 3 and 4 of "The Decalogue" (1988, Krzysztof Kieslowski; in Polish). ♦ Sept. 9-10 at 1: "The Saragossa Manuscript" (1965, Wojciech Has; in Polish).

WALTER READE THEATRE

Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Sept. 8-10: "The Next Generation of Film." Sept. 8 at 7: An interview with Richard Linklater, followed by "Dazed and Confused" (1993). ♦ Sept. 9 at 1: An interview with Kevin Smith, followed by "Dogma" (1999). ♦ Sept. 9 at 5: "How to Find a Job in the Movie Business," a panel discussion led by New York Times critic Stephen Holden. ♦ Sept. 9 at 7: An interview with Kevin Williamson, followed by "Scream" (1996). ♦ Sept. 10 at 2: An interview with Glenn McQueen of Pixar animation studio, followed by "Toy Story 2" (1999, John Lasseter). ♦ Sept. 10 at 5: A panel discussion of "Sex, Violence, and the Box Office." ♦ Sept. 10 at 7: An interview with Jim Morris of Industrial Light and Magic, followed by "Saving Private Ryan" (1998, Steven Spielberg).

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but we **CAN**
make better
deaths."*

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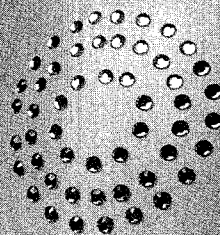
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT THE NEXT ACT



The singular achievement of post-Soviet Russia is freedom of expression. Its fruits are a glorious thing. Where once television broadcast bogus reports on the grain harvests of the steppe, there is now a version of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" in the language of Pushkin. On Saturday nights at eleven, a Moscow channel presents "The Naked Truth," featuring one Svetlana Pesotskaya, who reads the news fully clothed and then strips down to her brassiere to announce the sports. (A team of topless strippers does the weather.) Anyone can report anything, print anything, say anything. The newspapers are filled with stock tips and personal ads (Lonely S & M nihilist, 38, seeks her Raskolnikov. Car a must). The sole danger to serious literature now is not censorship but, rather, the danger it faces everywhere: indifference. And, oh yes, television—especially the independent channel, NTV—delivers ambitious and often blistering reports on the Russian government, and never more so than during the tragic affair of the submarine Kursk.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, and his top advisers responded to

the Kursk affair with purely Soviet reflexes. These were the same reflexes that led the Politburo, in 1986, to yank a curtain down around the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. In both cases, the leadership cared only for itself, as if by ignoring the problem, by making it a secret, by minimizing it, it would somehow go away. But while Chernobyl became a global issue only after outsiders, the Swedes, began to register dangerous levels of radioactive drift, the fate of the Kursk became known to the world mainly through the Russian press. The longer Putin stayed on vacation and ignored the public outcries and the Western offers of aid, the tougher the coverage grew.

Russia is a great country for metaphor, and so last week, when the Ostanokino television tower burst into flames and smoldered over the Moscow sky-



Vladimir Putin

line, one could understand the obsessive search for meaning. Was this a kind of memorial torch for the men of the Kursk? Was the fire the ultimate sign of Russia's weakness and deterioration? Or was it something just as ominous, a harbinger of an imminent government assault on that precious thing the free press?

Even Boris Yeltsin's harshest critics would have to concede that, through it all, he held true to precisely two principles. The first was his absolute hatred for the Communist Party. As President, he would never countenance a compromise, much less a coalition, with the Communists. The second was his commitment to a free press. It is true that the businessmen who control the Russian media practically carried the moribund Yeltsin to reelection in 1996, but those same outlets were often brutally critical of him. There was never a sense that censorship was returning.

All that has changed under Vladimir Putin. As President, he has shown himself ready to form coalitions with the Communists when it suits his needs, and his resentment of the press is palpable. When he found time, at last, to meet with families mourning the men lost on the Kursk, he lashed out at the media for "robbing the country, the Army, and the Navy." Putin has been particularly infuriated by NTV's forthright coverage of the ongoing war in Chechnya; in May, his government raided NTV's headquarters and jailed its chairman, Vladimir Gusinsky, for

four days, on financial charges that have since been dropped. Now the rumors around Moscow are that Putin will exert pressure on Gusinsky to sell a controlling interest of NTV shares to an owner who is servile to the Kremlin. That pressure could take any form. Don't be surprised if Gusinsky is again charged in a corruption case. (He's no angel, but he was also the one Russian oligarch to create something of real value.)

Gorbachev and Yeltsin, for all their faults, endured and learned from the tragedy and the absurdity of modern Soviet history. Both men had close relatives who were imprisoned during Stalin's purges. Both men worked alongside the dead souls of the lower Party ranks in miserable provincial towns and cities. And both men, each in his own way, came to the conclusion, for reasons both Machiavellian and moral, that, as Gorbachev famously declared before coming to power, "*Tak zhit' nel'zya*": "We cannot live this way any longer."

The most striking thing about Putin's biography is not merely that he is a product of the K.G.B.—he was a mediocre career officer—but that he is also a product of the seventies. Putin came of age in Leningrad during the Brezhnev era, in years of relative prosperity, superpower confidence, cozy cynicism, and circumscribed lives. These were miserable times for the dissident few, but for someone like Putin, who just wanted to live out the fantasy life he had read about in spy novels, they were happy, even smug times. The state was supreme. The tea was hot. And the sugar sweet.

Only strong and stable countries can afford mediocrity. Russia now needs a leader far greater than Gorbachev or Yeltsin; it needs a creative and liberal intelligence. It needs a Jefferson, an F.D.R. There is nothing in Putin's biography and nothing in his behavior to suggest that he is anything more than a Soviet leader without the ideology, a man who believes in strength alone. His next act will be to decide what he is willing to do—what he is willing to destroy—to attain that strength. The question is whether that act will be broadcast on NTV.

—David Remnick

DEPT. OF FORMER LIVES A FILM DIRECTOR'S BACK PAGES



Cameron Crowe's new film, "Almost Famous," a fairy tale about a teen-age *Rolling Stone* reporter assigned to tag along with a big-time rock band in the early nineteen-seventies, recapitulates Crowe's own fairy-tale career as a teen-age *Rolling Stone* reporter who tagged along with big-time rock bands in the early nineteen-seventies. Already a veteran of the underground rock press—he had written articles for magazines like *Zoo World*, *Circus*, and *Creem*—Crowe joined *Rolling Stone* in 1973, at fifteen, and became



Gene Simmons and cub reporter

a mainstay at the magazine, profiling the era's top acts, from Fleetwood Mac and Eric Clapton to the Allman Brothers Band.

"Almost Famous" indulges in its share of rock-star logrolling. Peter Dinklage, who hired Crowe to write the liner notes for "Frampton Comes Alive!," his breakthrough 1976 album, serves as a "technical consultant" and

also has a small role as a road manager. Crowe's greatest coup was to secure the good will of Led Zeppelin, whom he interviewed in 1975 (and who provided much of the inspiration for the film's fictional rock band, Stillwater). After Crowe screened the film for the singer Robert Plant and the guitarist Jimmy Page, the pair released five classic Led Zeppelin songs for use in the film. But what about the seventies rock stars who aren't on Crowe's payroll or in his pocket? Do they remember him? And, if so, what do they remember?

"It was a very hazy time," the guitarist Steve Howe says. That would be 1973, when Crowe published a profile of the progressive-rock ensemble Yes, of which Howe was a leading member. "I'd love to remember it more clearly. But I do remember Cameron. Certain people always look like they're going to be somebody even if they're not yet somebody. Cameron had that kind of confidence. We ran into him a few times, on a few tours. He was a good sponge, but not in a derogatory sense—he wasn't borrowing money or anything."

"Well, his reputation certainly didn't precede him," Gene Simmons says. Simmons has spent almost three decades as the leader of Kiss, the heavily made-up, aggressively mysterious metal quartet that Crowe interviewed for *Circus* in 1974. "When we met Cameron, the immediate reaction was 'Where's your dad or your mom?' He seemed to be concerned more about the nature of rock stars and less about the songs. Songs are kind of moot. You either like them or you don't. Cameron asked questions like 'When you wear the makeup, how does it make you feel?'"

Crowe has more specific memories of both interviews. "Yes was the second article I did for *Rolling Stone*, after Poco," he says. "My total fandom and knowledge of their music impressed the band. I would get insanely specific about their songs, and they were happy to talk to me. With Kiss, I remember that Gene was one of the savvier media subjects, one of the few guys who seemed to know that if you asked the reporter about his own life, the reporter would, almost out of shock, a) talk and b) possibly like you more. Gene was openly

solicitous of my opinion. At one point, he asked me”—here, Crowe drops his voice in imitation of Simmons—“What’s your favorite film ever?” I said, ‘To Kill a Mockingbird,’ and he said, ‘Ah, you’re interested in racism.’ I had liked the movie because of the kids in Halloween outfits and Atticus with the dog. But I remember thinking, This guy is working me.”

In 1974, Crowe profiled the singer-songwriter Jackson Browne. Generally guarded with reporters, Browne was garrulous with the young Crowe, speaking at length about his sexual exploits and his brushes with juvenile delinquency. When Crowe’s article was published, Browne felt betrayed, having viewed Crowe more as a kid brother than as a working journalist.

“That Jackson Browne piece is, in some way, at the heart of this new movie,” Crowe says. “Those first three Jackson Browne albums were as close to me as any music I could imagine. I fought to write about Jackson, and when I interviewed him I ran hours upon hours of tape. We talked about everything. I was hurt that he felt victimized, and yet I felt like I really had captured an artist that I cared about capturing.”

Will the artists care to see what the old cub reporter is up to these days? “Strangely, I’m not very filmic,” Howe says. “I’m so fixated by sound. I need time for my music, and the music of others. I like to jump around different fields of music so much that to get me to sit down and watch something is difficult. I would like to pick up with Cameron’s film work, though. Maybe this new film is my door in.”

—Ben Greenman

DEPT. OF SELF-HELP A RUBIN’S GUIDE TO GETTING IT ALL



Finish your own sentences, indulge in intimidating rages, mete out arbitrary punishments, look as tall as possible, wear sunglasses, weed a flower bed, boast about how little sleep you need. These are some of the things that Gretchen



*“It might be considered a hate crime, so tell me honestly.
Did you shoot your husband because of his gender?”*

Craft Rubin would have you do in the pursuit of power, money, fame, and sex. But Rubin resorted to nothing so obvious last week as she sat against the zebra-adorned wallpaper at Gino, the crusty Upper East Side cash-only relic.

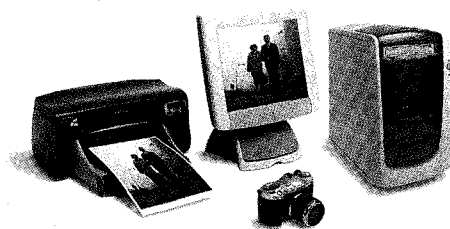
Rubin, the daughter-in-law of former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, has just published “Power Money Fame Sex: A User’s Guide.” In form and tone, it is related, distantly, to the “Official Preppy Handbook,” and in content, not so distantly, to primers like Michael Korda’s “Power! How to Get It, How to Use It.” The book lays bare the contrivances of power and gives tips on how to do things right—for example, “curry favor with someone who can protect you from your faults” (page 20) or waste something to signal your wealth: “Try ordering an expensive wine in a restaurant, then leaving it opened and untouched when you leave” (page 129).

Rubin, who is a slim, freckled thirty-four-year-old redhead, was doing a little signalling herself at Gino, however inadvertently. She did not finish her spaghetti (see “waste,” page 129); she unclasped her Filofax to write down an address (how full it was!); and she wore a sleeveless cotton dress with a cool Mondrian pattern (she admitted that she’d thought it would suit the restaurant’s fifties aesthetic). “People become very self-conscious when they read this book,” she said. “A lot of it is pretty reprehensible. But I have definitely applied things from it that I wouldn’t have thought of before, like the self-promotion checklist.”

She has, without apparent embarrassment, thrown herself into the task. She used her Rubin connections to secure blurbs from Kurt Andersen, Ken Auletta, and Harold Evans. She laced her acknowledgments page with the names of



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powerful people, among them Steven Spielberg and Warren Buffett—though a tip on page 196 indicates that their presence there is a hoax: “Pack your acknowledgements with thanks to several stars in your field. . . . How could anyone ever know that you’ve never spoken to them? (See acknowledgements page.)” And she has helped arrange a book party for herself, later this month, to be hosted by Bob and Judy Rubin, at Michael’s, on West Fifty-fifth Street—a perfect arena for what she calls “proximity power” (page 21).

Gretchen Rubin knows a thing or two about proximity power. Having been the editor-in-chief of the *Yale Law Journal*, she clerked for Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor and served at the Federal Communications Commission as an adviser to its then chairman, Reed Hundt, with whom she now teaches courses at Yale and Columbia on the business and regulation of television. She met her husband, Jamie Rubin, an investment banker at Allen & Company, in the library at Yale Law School. “Our carrels were back to back, just like Bill and Hillary.” Then there’s her father-in-law, who has just signed a \$3.3-million contract to do a book of his own.

“Bob Rubin’s a great example, and I’m not just saying this because I’m his daughter-in-law,” she said. “Bob has what I like to call ‘the attraction of prowess.’ He has this air of not having to try so hard. And ‘the attraction of presence’—not having a lot of needs, not being insecure. One of the stories that was told about him in Washington was that every week he was given a certain allotment of the President’s time. But when he didn’t have to see the President he would cede his time and use it for something else. And everybody around him was, like, ‘Oh my God, giving up your time with the President is so amazing!’” In the right circumstances, relinquishing proximity power can be the real power move.

“I think Gretchen is enormously talented, but this is her project,” Bob Rubin said the other day, explaining that he didn’t really want to say much about “Power Money Fame Sex.” Here, he was abiding by one of the “pillars of power”: “control information” (page 28). He added, “I have a feeling that her book is going to sell a lot better than mine.” That’s self-deprecation (page 70).

—Nick Paumgarten

THE CHEERING SECTION PATRICK EWING’S NO. 1 FAN



The Patrick Ewing fan club, if there is one, appears to operate underground: Knicks management doesn’t have a number for it but suggests that callers search the Web. This is not surprising, given the way sports columnists and Knicks fans responded last month to the trade that nearly sent Ewing to the Seattle SuperSonics. The *New York Post*’s headline shouted “GOOD RIDDANCE!” When the deal collapsed at the last minute, Ewing, the seven-foot center who has spent his entire professional career in New York, found himself marooned in a hostile, unappreciative town. But Ewing does have at least one public advocate: Susan Costello, the editorial director of Abbeville Press, the art-book publishing house, and the editor of Ewing’s art book for children, “In the Paint.”

Costello, who is in her fifties, has a shy smile and a firm demeanor and is fifteen inches shorter than her favorite Knick. The other day, Costello was guarding her desk in her office, which overlooks New York Harbor. She wore a suit that was the same powder blue as the uniforms worn by the Cleveland Cavaliers, and was busy guiding some new titles toward publication, among them a book on Mayan script and an expanded edition of a history of women photographers. She confessed that although she has been in publishing all her life, she became interested in basketball only a few years ago. “Well, I play tennis a lot, and I began to admire how athletic basketball players were,” she said. “They had to have enough energy to run up and down the court, and I thought their moves were poetic.”

Costello has been to exactly two games, her first four years ago. “They were such wonderful seats, right in front of Clyde Frazier,” she said. “I could hear him commentating as I watched the game, and since I’d studied it a little by watching it on television, I could understand it better. If you just go and watch games, I don’t know if, without

having heard commentators, you can understand it as well.”

The Ewing book proposal came in three years ago, via the Discover credit-card people. A Ewing landscape had just been featured on a Discover Private Issue card. The proposal was co-authored by Linda Louis, an art teacher at the Village Community School. While other editors at Abbeville passed on the project, Costello jumped on it. “I felt that it would be not just another book with a superstar,” she said.

The book has done well. The *Los Angeles Times* called it “[a]n irresistibly heartfelt, horizon-expanding book for children.” There was a signing at F.A.O. Schwarz, and even though he had one of his controversial Achilles tendon injuries, Ewing impressed Costello by staying for two hours—longer than he had to.

The week the trade almost happened was a tough one for her. “I was very surprised,” she said. “I think that people should have some sort of perspective about what he contributes. He can’t be perfect every night. But on balance his record shows that he contributed more than he detracted from the team, and people don’t seem to keep that in mind.” She remains chagrined that the Knicks official she heard on the news wasn’t as grammatically precise as she would have liked. “He didn’t really make it clear that Patrick was actually going to be staying,” she said. “He said that for now he’s on the team, playing for New York. He didn’t say that we are committed to keeping him here, and that disappointed me.”

Will Ewing persevere? “I think he’ll be totally focussed, because he has a great deal of pride,” she said. “He will always want to do the best he can possibly do. I think he brings that to the game and to painting, and I would imagine to other parts of his life, although I can’t really say that.”

When Costello was asked to comment on Ewing’s play in general, she excused herself and went off for a short while to compose a brief text. She came back with this: “When Patrick’s on the court, I see him as a valiant warrior whom we can count on to save the day. He can defend his territory like no other, send a laser pass to a fast-break teammate, toss off a thrilling fade-away jumper, block a sure shot, or rouse the crowd with a fierce slam dunk.”

—Robert Sullivan

THE FINANCIAL PAGE WHY IS WALL STREET KILLING ITS CASH COWS?

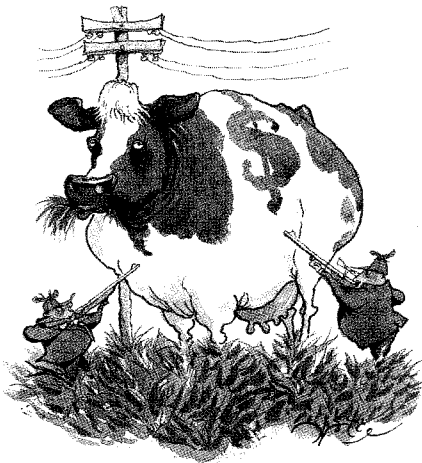
Sometime in the past several years, a cultural revolution swept through the stock market. Once, it seemed, the world belonged to the blue chips, the big, old-line companies with reliable cash flows. But, driven by the promise of new technology, investors have come to love nothing better than a radical young company. Behold the Wall Street version of the Red Guard. If you're a two-month-old optics firm, investors parade you on their shoulders. If you're a mature, profitable, slow-growing company, you get sent to the cabbage farm.

In theory, of course, investors should care about only one thing: future profits. But the contemporary fetish for growth has led to an anomaly: huge piles of cash are being offered at fire-sale prices. A.T. & T. is a case in point. The stock market gives the average company a value twenty-five times as high as its annual earnings—the endlessly bandied-about “price-to-earnings multiple.” A.T. & T.’s is just 16.5. You might think that’s because investors are skittish about the company’s debt load or its aggressive expansion into the cable business. In fact, the target of investors’ ire is A.T. & T.’s good old consumer long-distance business. It’s been labelled an “albatross” and “toxic waste.” *Business Week* called it the company’s “key problem.” And the *Wall Street Journal* wondered if A.T. & T. might be worth more dead than alive. All this makes it sound as if the long-distance business were a financial roach motel, where money goes in but doesn’t come out. The opposite is true. This year, the unit will generate somewhere between eight and nine billion dollars in cash. And in the past three years profit margins in the consumer long-distance business have soared.

What’s not to like? Well, the business is shrinking, not growing, and a decade hence we may all be making our telephone calls over the Internet. Long-distance isn’t where you’re going to find the next big thing. Under pressure from investors, A.T. & T. is even talking about putting it on the block. That’s a big mistake. In the foreseeable future, long-distance is

going to be what every business wants to be: a cash machine. Even in a worst-case scenario—let’s say it shrinks ten per cent a year for the next five years and twenty per cent a year for the five years after that, and then goes out of business—the division is worth, conservatively, more than thirty billion dollars in today’s money. The market is pricing it closer to ten.

That’s Red Guard capitalism for you. This year, Philip Morris—which owns Kraft Foods and Miller Brewing, as well as that big cigarette division—will have a cash flow, free and clear, of about eleven billion dollars. Yet its price-to-earnings multiple is a miserly nine. Think about it: for eighty-two billion dollars, you can buy a company that, every year, is going to give



you eleven billion dollars in cash to do whatever you want with. By most standards, that’s a great investment. Granted, tobacco stocks have been weighed down because investors are worried about the risks of litigation and regulation and, perhaps, the chance that they’ll burn in hell for profiting from cancer sticks. But this is capitalism, damn it! Eleven billion dollars a year will pay for a lot of risk.

Or look at Bank of America, the nation’s largest bank. This year, it will bring in ten billion dollars in profits. Its price-to-earnings multiple, though, is just 10.4. That makes sense only if investors think that Bank of America will go belly up a decade from now, and nobody really does. Wall Street to Bank of America: *Your money’s no good here.*

The stock market’s obsession with growth is understandable. A company’s

stock price is meant to represent its future earnings, not its current ones. And everyone wants to find the next Microsoft or Dell, buy it cheap, and ride it to an easy fortune. Alas, there are no bargain babies anymore: as soon as such companies appear, investors flock to them, sending their stock prices soaring. And even the best and fastest-growing tech startups will take years before they’re making as much as Philip Morris or Bank of America is making right now. That’s assuming, of course, that everything goes right and some hot new technology doesn’t knock them out of the box.

Look at Brocade Communications Systems, which makes fibre-channel switches for storage-area networks (or gizmos for whatsits, if you prefer). Brocade is a wonderful company. It has real earnings, and it’s growing fast. But whereas Bank of America, say, trades at ten times earnings, Brocade trades at six hundred and eight times earnings. Reality check: even if Brocade catches all the breaks and grows as fast as any company has in recent history, it will still make less real money in the next ten years than Bank of America or Philip Morris or even A.T. & T.’s albatross of a long-distance business will make *this year alone*. So why are we giving these cash-rich codgers the Eskimo treatment, putting them on ice floes and waving goodbye?

It may be worth resurrecting a bit of Old Economy wisdom concerning the “cash cow.” Back in the late sixties, the Boston Consulting Group used that term for slow-growing businesses that didn’t require much investment to keep going and generated tremendous profits. Companies that had cash-cow businesses were advised to milk them for all they were worth, not discard them because they weren’t living up to fanciful expectations. After all, a dollar earned selling Kraft Macaroni & Cheese will buy you the same cup of coffee as a dollar earned selling fibre-channel switches. Today, people may be scanting sure things and paying premium prices for long shots, but ultimately greed is going to prevail. Wall Street *will* learn to respect its elders. What hopeful investors see in the future income statements of babies like Brocade, the geezers have already got.

—James Surowiecki

WHEN MISSILES COLLIDE

How President Clinton set his own Star Wars trap.

BY PETER J. BOYER



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Very early on the morning of July 8th, a hundred-and-twenty-one-pound "exoatmospheric kill vehicle" whirled harmlessly by its target, high above the Pacific Ocean. It was a conspicuous miss in a relatively undemanding test of President Clinton's proposed National Missile Defense program, an attempt to build a shield to protect the United States against missiles from "rogue nations" like North Korea and Iraq. The technical anomaly that caused the failure—a computer glitch—was not as significant as the political anomaly that followed.

Some of the most reliable advocates of missile defense—people from the very quarter that had pressured President Clinton into trying to build the shield—seemed almost to welcome the botched test. "This setback may be a blessing," Margaret Thatcher declared. The failure was a blessing for Clinton, too, and offered him a way out of a vexing political dilemma.

The President's problem derived, perhaps characteristically, from his attempt to find footing on both sides of a question that has been debated for thirty years: Which will better guarantee America's security, arms control or missile defense? Faith in arms control was Democratic dogma, as was a belief in the inviolability of the Anti-Ballistic-Missile Treaty—the 1972 agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union that prohibited each side from building a nationwide defense against the other's long-range missiles. But eighteen months ago, pressured by Congress and responding to the supposed threat of "rogue nations," Clinton agreed, with apparent reluctance, to undertake a missile-defense program. He chose a plan with dual—and conflicting—objectives: providing a national defense (however minimal) while preserving (as far as possible) the A.B.M. Treaty. Clinton's National Missile Defense plan, which would eventually place radar and a hundred missile interceptors in

Alaska, is designed to block only a limited strike, and would be useless against the rain of multiple-warhead missiles that Russia is capable of unleashing. Yet, because even so limited a system would violate the A.B.M. Treaty, its deployment would require Russian approval. Last September, the President's foreign-policy team began lobbying Moscow to allow minor changes in the treaty—with Clinton putting the case to the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, personally—but the Russians did not budge.

That left Clinton, who had promised a decision on deployment this summer, with two hard choices: he could, after more than a year of selling Americans and our allies on the need for missile defense, simply abandon it, leaving Vice-President Gore vulnerable on the issue during his Presidential campaign; or he could defy the Russians and go ahead with the system anyway. Thus, the failed July 8th test could be seen as a bit of good luck: it illuminated a third way. And so, at the end of last week, the President, in a speech at Georgetown University, announced that development and testing would be continued, but he deferred to the next President the decision of whether to actually deploy the defense system, saying, "I simply cannot conclude with the information I have today that we have enough confidence in the technology, and the operational effectiveness of the entire N.M.D. system, to move forward to deployment."

The deferral doesn't mean that the Democrats will oppose the program. "The vast majority of Democrats now think that it's a bad thing to be on the 'wrong side' of missile defense," Senator Joseph Biden, a respected Democratic voice on strategic issues, says. "I'm not ceding that ground, but I am a distinct minority." Missile-defense skeptics like Biden, who question the proposed system's cost (estimated at sixty billion dollars), its strategic implications (will it rekindle the

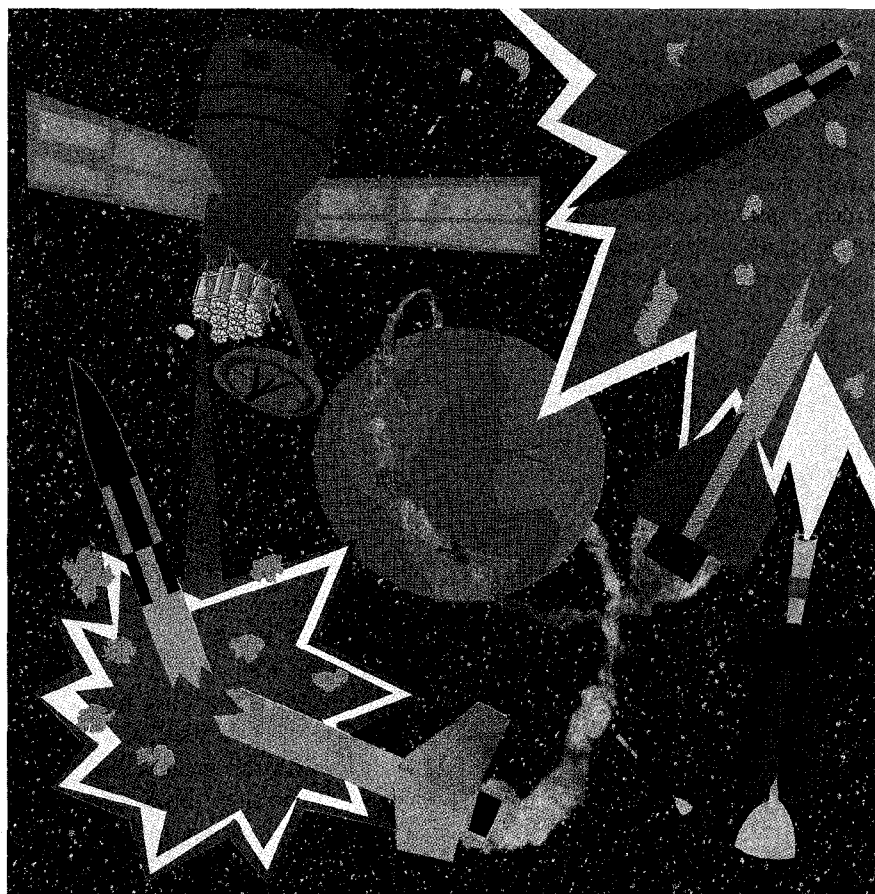
arms race?), and its effectiveness (will it work?), are glad about any decision that delays its deployment. But they worry that Clinton's support of the system, however conditional, has closed the debate.

Missile-defense advocates are also inclined to see the July 8th failure as a lucky break. They, too, believe that the debate is over, and that they have won. Now that Clinton has handed the decision over to the next Administration, they can push for a much more ambitious program. "Oh, they'll go for it all," Biden says. "Land, sea, space—the whole thing."

The idea of building a defense against missiles is as old as the intercontinental missile itself, and the argument over missile defense is as old as the idea. The debate has always been savage—the subject is disputed on scientific, policy, and political grounds—and has often been marked by misrepresentation, intolerance, and rigidity on all sides.

The ruling national-security concept is mutual assured destruction, or MAD—the notion that in a world of competing nuclear powers stability is maintained by each side's assurance that any nuclear strike would be met by a massive retaliatory attack, resulting in the annihilation of both countries. In the nineteen-sixties, the competing doctrine was most forcefully voiced by Edward Teller, the father of the hydrogen bomb, who argued publicly that "defense is better than retaliation," because it is far preferable to "shoot at enemy missiles than to suffer attack and then have to shoot at people in return." That debate focussed on a missile-defense system called Safeguard, developed in the Johnson Administration (when it was called Sentinel) and deployed by President Nixon. The Sentinel plan provided for anti-missile interceptor rockets to be scattered around the United States, each tipped with a thermonuclear bomb (some of the bombs were designed at Teller's Livermore Laboratory) that would explode in the path of incoming enemy missiles, destroying them in the sky.

There were genuine scientific doubts about Sentinel/Safeguard—most notably, the possibility that the interceptor's nuclear explosion would cause atmospheric chaos and cripple the system—but ideological passions also spilled into the debate. In the heated political climate of the



"This is a deep, dark secret," an S.D.I. insider says. "We really didn't have a 'death ray.'"

late sixties and early seventies, the debate over missile defense became a proxy battle in the war between the left and the right, and it still is today. Because of Teller's 1954 testimony against J. Robert Oppenheimer, who had been accused of being a security risk on account of Communist ties, large numbers of scientists and academics felt that supporting Teller would be tantamount to supporting McCarthyism.

Safeguard barely survived the United States Senate, winning approval by one vote, and budget cuts reduced its mission from guarding cities to protecting offensive Minuteman missiles. By the time Safeguard was deployed, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) between the Soviets and the United States had produced the A.B.M. Treaty, which had the MAD concept essentially written into its preamble. The treaty and an amendment two years later limited each party's anti-missile forces to a hundred interceptors, situated at a single site. Two years after that, Congress, after having spent \$5.7 billion on Safeguard, decided that the system's upkeep was too costly to warrant its limited purpose, and dropped

it. The "balance of terror" had prevailed. (The Soviets, on the other hand, fully deployed their equivalent of Safeguard around Moscow, and Russia continues to maintain and test it.)

In the decade after the signing of the A.B.M. Treaty, one of its framers, the strategic-policy "wise man" Paul Nitze, became alarmed that the balance was tilting the Soviets' way. In 1981, the Reagan Administration created a top-secret task force within the White House Science Council to analyze how, or whether, the latest weapons science might remedy the strategic imbalance.

One of the experts on the panel was Gregory Canavan, a physicist and former Air Force officer. A tall, genial Mississippian of no particular political bent, he had been a White House Fellow under Jimmy Carter and later, as Deputy Assistant Energy Secretary, helped to create the Department of Energy. He also had a long association with Edward Teller, whom he had met as a cadet at the Air Force Academy when Teller was a visiting lecturer. (Teller later encouraged him to pursue his doctorate.) Nevertheless,

during the protracted public controversy over Safeguard Canavan had ultimately sided with those who argued that the system would be wrecked by its own bombs.

For several months, the White House panel looked in vain for ways to improve America's strategic offensive forces. The weapons labs were already churning out nuclear weapons as fast as they could, and the scientists on the task force couldn't come up with anything better than the strategic triad of the MX missile on land, the B-1 bomber in the air (both in development), and the Trident submarine force. The panel then spent several months considering alternative defensive technologies. "Our final recommendation," Canavan says, "was Gosh, we don't see anything really earthshaking here in the defensive area, but there are some promising avenues in lasers and interceptors, and it would be useful to put a little bit more money in these areas." When Reagan, in his now famous speech of March 23, 1983, called for the creation of an entirely new missile-defense system, to be called the Strategic Defense Initiative, Canavan and most of his colleagues were taken completely by surprise.

There are many versions of the story of how Ronald Reagan was inspired to seek an alternative to MAD, including an account by Reagan himself. All share a basic narrative. In the summer of 1979, the year before he ran against Jimmy Carter, Reagan visited the

North American Aerospace Defense Command, in Colorado. The facility, buried deep in the granite of Cheyenne Mountain, is a tracking center, whose mission is to give early warning of any incoming missiles. The command center, several stories high, was filled with monitors and scopes and a huge situation screen with a map of the United States outlined on it. Officials told Reagan how the center, through signals received from far-flung sensors, could track even a glove lost by an astronaut in space. It could follow a Soviet missile from the launch pad, watch it during its trajectory through space, and then see it slip back through the atmosphere as it headed for its target on American soil. Reagan asked the commanding general, James Hill, "What can you do to stop it?"

"Nothing," Hill said.

"I think the thing that struck me," Reagan said after the visit, "was the irony that here, with this great technology of ours, we can do all of this, yet we cannot stop any of the weapons that are coming at us."

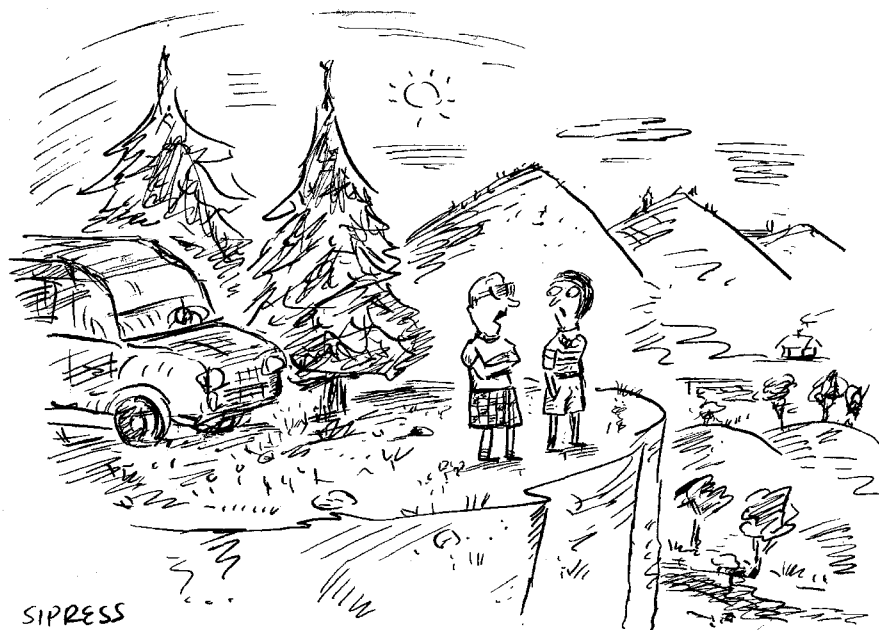
The paradox of Cheyenne Mountain captured Reagan's political imagination. "Reagan's solutions to problems were always the same as the guy in the bar's," Stu Spencer, his campaign manager, once said, and in the 1983 S.D.I. speech Reagan directly confronted the subtle logic of the MAD doctrine, asking, "Wouldn't it be better to save lives than to avenge them?" Reagan, who in

the past had likened the "balance of terror" to two men sitting across a table, each with a cocked pistol aimed at the other's head, issued an appeal to scientists to "give us the means of rendering these weapons impotent and obsolete."

If Reagan's speech succeeded with the "guy in the bar," the response from many in scientific and policy circles was unveiled hostility. The *Times* reported the next day the belief among some scientists that such a system might never be technically feasible, but that even if it was made to work "it would be strategically 'dangerous.'" An editorial a few days later called Reagan's vision "a pipe dream, a projection of fantasy in policy." Other journalists labelled the plan Star Wars.

In initiating S.D.I., Reagan had dictated no timetable, favored no particular technology, and set almost no limit on the monumental research undertaking he had proposed. (He did preclude the use of nuclear weapons to stop the incoming missiles.) Reagan's call to the scientific community went largely unanswered, however; of the scientists who supported the effort, Teller was by far the most imposing and influential. Teller's passion at the moment was fixed on a concept employing an X-ray laser, which would be "pumped" by a nuclear bomb. Such a powerful beam—a million times brighter than a hydrogen bomb—deployed in space could potentially achieve the most desirable goal of any missile-defense system: knocking out an enemy missile in its "boost phase," or shortly after it left the launch pad.

The laser project, called Excalibur by the scientists at Teller's lab, was just one of many technologies that were explored in the S.D.I. development program. But, because of Teller's fame and his persuasiveness, and the exotic allure of the idea (the press called it the Death Star), Excalibur attracted most of the public attention and a good deal of the funding. In the political wars over S.D.I., the laser became a favorite rhetorical symbol, its prospects exaggerated or criticized to fit the argument. "This is a deep, dark secret," Gregory Canavan says now, looking back. "For a period of two or three years in S.D.I., we really didn't know what we were doing. . . . Dr. Teller and Dr. Wood"—Lowell Wood, a colleague of Teller's at Livermore—"and I were amongst the maybe half-dozen people



"So this is the famous environment everyone's so hyped up about?"

who understood that there really wasn't anything behind the Reagan speech. We didn't really know what we wanted to do, we really didn't have a 'death ray,' or anything. We were just doing research."

An experiment performed by Livermore in a nuclear test in March of 1985 produced an X-ray that Teller and Wood suggested could be of weapon-level strength. Canavan disagreed, and subsequent tests proved him right. That effectively finished Excalibur, and during the next year Canavan met regularly with Teller and Wood to talk about other options. At technical conferences, the three scientists sometimes slipped away to conduct what became a ritual exercise. Canavan would propose some new concept for a missile defense, Wood would present the argument against it, and Teller would mediate. Wood always won, usually with the argument that Canavan's latest proposed system was vulnerable to nuclear attack.

Then, one morning in November, 1986, Canavan happened to be in Cambridge for a conference, and had breakfast with Teller and Wood. This time, Canavan worked backward, essentially designing a weapon by using Wood's past objections and eliminating them one by one. To avoid the problem of being "blinded" by a Soviet strike at the American radar satellites, Canavan suggested, the system would have its own sensors. To avoid being cut off from command and control, it would be autonomous, and so would require considerable computer intelligence. It would be maneuverable and hardened, to survive an attack. The system would be based in space, and it would be small enough to make the cost of deployment moderate. If there were thousands of units in orbit, and if they were relatively cheap, the Soviets couldn't afford to go after each one.

"Yes, that sounds good," Teller said. "What is it?"

Eventually, Canavan expanded on his idea: a constellation of small satellites that, acting on their own, could detect enemy launches, thrust themselves toward the target missiles, and "kill" them with the kinetic force of the resulting collision.

"Can you do this?" Teller asked.

Canavan said he believed that he could. A similar idea had been considered years before, but bulky computers and cameras had made the notion impractic-

cal. With microchips and new, miniaturized cameras, Canavan said, such a system might well be possible. Teller urged the two younger scientists to give it further consideration. A few months later, they met again. "Wood had not only looked at all the specifications for the components," Canavan recalls. "He had actually gone out and bought all the different pieces that would be required to build this thing. He had them in his briefcase and was dumping them out and sticking them together and showing how they would fit. Lowell had become the wild enthusiast for the thing. He and Dr. Teller were very excited about it."

Officials in the Reagan Administration were also enthusiastic, and set aside funding for a full development program for the system of space interceptors, which the scientists called Brilliant Pebbles. Reagan loved the concept, which was publicly unveiled in 1988, on the fifth anniversary of the Star Wars speech. That year, the project received \$18 million, which was increased to \$46 million in 1989 and \$392 million by 1991. During the Bush Administration, the S.D.I. program seemed at last to be developing a missile-defense system. Its jewel was Brilliant Pebbles, which was relatively cheap, could be deployed in the near future (within five years, it was said), and might be practicable. If the smart interceptors (each about three feet long and weighing about a hundred pounds) worked, they would have huge geopolitical implications. "It's a cool beast," Canavan says of the interceptor. "It's all the technology that we know, and it's a fairly efficient little machine. But it had a problem: it really did have the capability of taking away the entire Soviet war machine. That was a terrible prospect for them."

Brilliant Pebbles was put on a development schedule of twenty-one tests, and made it through the first seven. But when the Soviet Union disappeared, so, it was thought, did the rationale for a multibillion-dollar robotic space force that could wage a full-scale nuclear war under its own command. The end was nearing, not only for Brilliant Pebbles but for Star Wars itself.

Had the United States decided to deploy any piece of the S.D.I. system, it first would have had to exercise the option in the A.B.M. Treaty which allows either side to withdraw from the treaty with six

months' notice "if it decides that extraordinary events [have] jeopardized its supreme interests." Some (including the agreement's author, Henry Kissinger) have argued that the treaty ceased to exist when one of its two signatories, the Soviet Union, ceased to exist. But the election of Bill Clinton restored the A.B.M. Treaty's dominion over strategic policy. S.D.I. was killed, and the prospect of a national missile defense seemed finally to be dead.

In 1994, the Republican leadership, mindful of polls showing that most Americans had long believed, mistakenly, that the country already *had* a missile-defense system, included a missile-defense provision in its Contract with America. The following year, when the Republicans took control of Congress, they needled Clinton with a series of bills designed to point up American vulnerability to enemy missiles and the Democrats' opposition to creating a program that most voters assumed the country already had. But what ultimately sustained the matter in post-Cold War politics was the serious policy question of how to deal with the threat of attack by smaller countries that were on the verge of acquiring a nuclear capability. And although Russia has made huge cutbacks in its rocket forces, its deteriorating command-and-control systems also raise troubling questions. In a 1995 incident that came to be known as the "Norwegian rocket launch," a Norwegian weather rocket lifted from its launch pad on a routine mission to study the northern lights. Within seconds, the rocket lit up Russian radar, and Russian technicians believed they might be seeing a hostile nuclear launch from a U.S. Trident submarine. Following a routine meant to avoid just such a mistake, Norway had notified Russia of the mission, but the diplomatic message somehow got lost within Russia's command structure. On full alert, Russian commanders notified President Boris Yeltsin, whose "black box," which he could use to authorize a counterattack, was activated. Luckily, Russian technicians realized that the Norwegian rocket was veering away from Russian territory.

Those were some of the issues underlying the protracted, high-stakes political engagement between the White House and Congress that the President, through two tactical mistakes, ultimately lost. In

1995, when the Republican "revolution" was in full thunder, Curt Weldon, a congressman from Pennsylvania, became the Party's point man on the missile-defense plan. At once scholarly and belligerent, Weldon is a formidable figure in Congress; he is a former schoolteacher with a passion for Russian studies and a disposition to master even the most arcane minutiae of an issue. As chairman of the Armed Services Committee's subcommittee on military research and development, Weldon asked General Malcolm O'Neill, then the head of the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (the successor to S.D.I.), for an assessment of the missile threat posed by nations like North Korea and Iraq. O'Neill said that he would request an intelligence estimate from the C.I.A. That was in late spring. Weldon waited to hear from O'Neill through the summer and into the fall. He was still waiting when his colleagues proposed and passed legislation mandating the deployment of missile defenses around the country by 2003. President Clinton vetoed the bill. Only then did Weldon get the intelligence report, which, it turned out, predicted that any threat from "rogue nations" was a decade or more away. The Democrats had the report, which had been leaked to them, and were using it to give the President cover and forestall any attempt by Congress to override the veto. That leak was the Administration's first mistake.

When Weldon saw the report, he was furious. He telephoned the C.I.A. director, John Deutch, and demanded a briefing on the estimate from the C.I.A. Deutch dispatched an agency analyst, David Osias, to Capitol Hill, where, in a secure fourth-floor hearing room, he was subjected to a typical Weldon grilling. When Osias repeated the agency's conclusion, Weldon bore in. Had the agency included Alaska and Hawaii when estimating the risk? No, Osias replied, it hadn't. "Ridiculous!" Weldon said. Had the agency factored in the impact of Russian political instability? No, Osias said. Had the agency considered the usual alternative scenarios? No, it had not. "This is ridiculous!" Weldon repeated. "This is garbage! You have politicized the process—you've taken information and you've spun it. This briefing is over." With that, he stood and walked out of the room.

Weldon immediately began attack-

ing the C.I.A.'s credibility. The next defense plan to pass Congress, in 1996, included language creating a bipartisan outside commission to investigate not only emerging threats to the United States but the C.I.A. itself. The commission, chaired by Donald H. Rumsfeld, who had served as Secretary of Defense during the Ford Administration, began its work in early 1998 and six months later, on July 15th, presented a classified three-hundred-page report to Congress, along with an unclassified summary. The report was jarring. In just five years, it said, Iran and North Korea would be able to deploy against the United States intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of inflicting major destruction. "The U.S. might well have little or no warning before operational deployment."

In the following weeks, the Administration downplayed the report, and the C.I.A. disputed its findings. On August 24th, General Henry H. Shelton, Clinton's chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that "the intelligence community can provide the necessary warning" if a rogue state is developing "an I.C.B.M. threat to the United States." A week later, on August 31st, North Korea launched a three-stage Taepo Dong missile over Japan, catching Shelton—and everyone else in the national-security establishment—by complete surprise. The missile launch, which North Korea said was an attempt to put a communications satellite into orbit, was a failure, but it suggested that North Korea had a three-stage solid-fuel rocket, with the potential to reach the United States.

The North Korean surprise came a little more than a month after Iran's launch of a Shahab-3 missile, whose thirteen-hundred-kilometre range includes all of Israel. That launch had also caught American intelligence off guard, and so had the test detonation by India, in May, of five nuclear bombs, which was followed by detonations by Pakistan. The C.I.A. re-

vised its estimate, conceding that emerging systems "potentially can kill tens of thousands, or even millions, of Americans, depending on the type of warhead, the accuracy, and the intended target."

Clinton's second mistake dated back to 1996. The Republican Presidential candidate, Senator Bob Dole, made missile defense a campaign issue, and had co-sponsored another bill mandating the development of a system. Clinton, not wanting to have to spend the campaign defending a fresh veto (and explaining to voters why they shouldn't get a defense they believed they already had), accepted a compromise. The deal was called "three-plus-three," and under its terms the Clinton Administration promised to research and develop a missile-defense system, and then decide whether to deploy it. If the system was to be deployed, it would be in place three years after that. The compromise bought political insurance for Clinton's '96 campaign and pushed the issue off his desk until 1999. But as the three-year deadline for making a decision approached the President was on trial in the Senate on impeachment charges. The trap he had set for himself closed.

The fight about missile defense was over. That month, Defense Secretary William Cohen, a Republican who had supported missile defense when he was in the Senate, announced the Administration's new view. "There is a threat, and the threat is growing," Cohen said. "We expect it will soon pose a danger not only to our troops overseas but also to Americans here at home." Cohen also said something previously unutterable—that the United States would work toward deploying a national missile defense even if it meant abrogating the A.B.M. Treaty. Weldon introduced a bill in the House that declared, "It is the policy of the United States to deploy a national missile defense." It passed by 345-71, with more Democrats voting for it than against. A companion bill passed the Senate, by a vote of 97-3, and in July, 1999, Clinton signed into law a mandate for a national missile defense.

In January, 1999, the Administration announced that it would devote \$6.6 billion to its new National Missile Defense project, and it spent the next eight months deciding what kind of system it

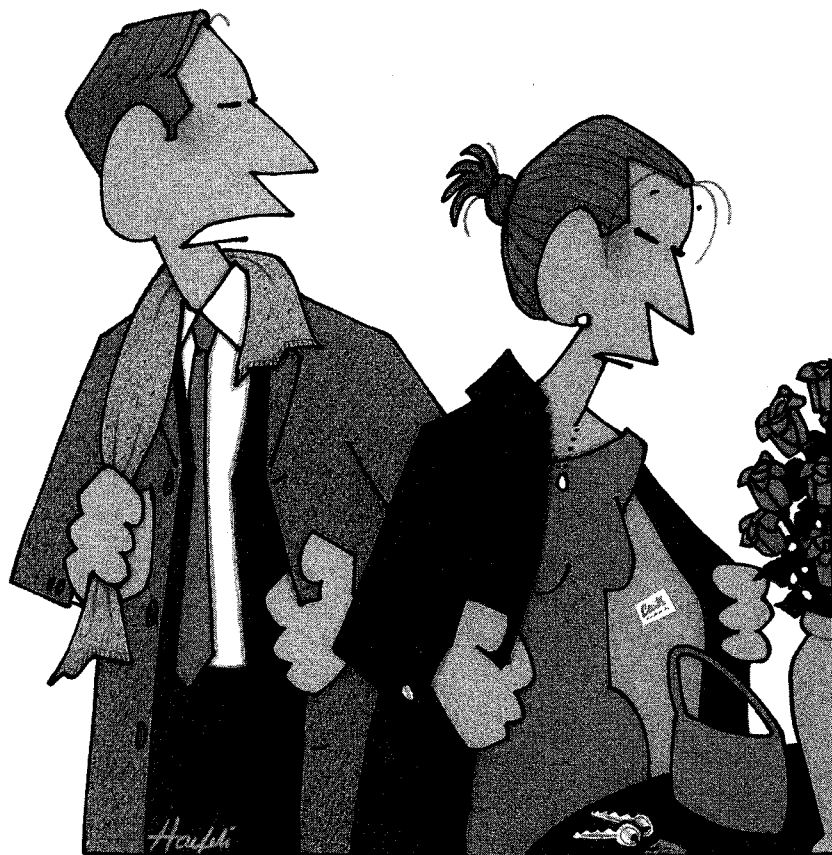


wanted. Theoretically, all options were open—a system based on land, on sea, in the air, or in space—but the Administration eventually chose to stay on land, the option that was deemed least offensive to the A.B.M. Treaty. The initial phase would put radar on Shemya Island, in the Aleutians, and twenty interceptor missiles elsewhere in Alaska by 2005 (when North Korea, notwithstanding Western hopes for its recent “rapprochement” with South Korea, is expected to have I.C.B.M. capability). Two years later, the force would expand to a full complement of a hundred interceptors. Yet even though it was a minimal system, the fact that its purpose was to provide a nationwide defense (however thin) necessitated changing or renouncing the A.B.M. agreement.

The 2005 deployment date was already two years beyond what was promised by the “three-plus-three” bargain, and Clinton’s announcement last week delayed deployment even further, until 2006 or 2007. Because of the harsh weather on Shemya Island, construction could not have begun until next spring, which meant that, because of the six months’ notice-of-withdrawal provision in the A.B.M. Treaty, the President had to make his final decision about deployment by November—when, of course, voters would be going to the polls.

Clinton had said that among the factors he would weigh in making his decision was technical feasibility. So far, the National Missile Defense plan, with two failures in three tests, has not made a strong case for itself. In a way, the system is an updated version of the old Safeguard but without the nukes. Instead of knocking out enemy missiles with an enormous explosion, the proposed system would rely on little exoatmospheric kill vehicles to home in on incoming missiles and destroy them merely by the force of the violent collisions. In the weapons trade, this is called “hitting a bullet with a bullet.”

The Administration had always known that as soon as it decided on the National Missile Defense system it would become a target of international criticism, and it did. Russia and China declared that the system would undermine their deterrence forces, thereby inviting a new arms race. American allies in Europe worried that the United States, in build-



“What do people write me off as?”

ing a system to protect itself but not its allies, was effectively “de-coupling” from its traditional Atlantic defense alliance. “You had the Administration for years opposing missile defense, and teaching our European allies that it was bad, destabilizing, unnecessary, costly, and so forth, and teaching the Russians and the Chinese the same thing,” Rumsfeld says. “And now people are surprised when we hear that being fed back to us.”

All along, Republicans, predictably, criticized the proposed system as being too limited. “It’s a shadow of itself,” Henry Cooper, the last head of the S.D.I. program, says. “If this is all we do, then it’s a disaster.” Democrats worried that because of the hurried schedule the anti-missile plan was an ill-considered “rush to failure,” as a review panel’s often cited report concluded.

All sides seemed to agree on one thing—the system wouldn’t work.

“The problem with the N.M.D. system is not simply that it could not fulfill its stated requirement,” the physicist Richard Garwin wrote, “but that it would have essentially no capability against a long-

range missile system deployed by North Korea, Iraq, or Iran to strike the United States with biological weapons or with nuclear weapons.” As a member of the Rumsfeld panel, but also as a consistent critic of missile defense, Garwin has special credibility on the subject. The principal flaws he sees in the system are its inability to avoid being fooled by decoys, which are easily deployed, and its inability to counteract a scatter of small “bomblets,” because it would be impossible for the interceptors to target them individually.

In July, when the exoatmospheric-kill-vehicle test failed, voices from all sides called upon President Clinton to do what he had apparently wanted to do anyway—defer the system’s deployment to the next Administration. His announcement last week should, of course, please the most devoted advocates of missile defense, who are already counting the days until what they hope will be George W. Bush’s inauguration. After Clinton’s speech, Bush faulted the Administration for failing “to strengthen America’s defenses,” and declared, “As

President, I intend to develop and deploy an effective missile-defense system at the earliest possible date to protect American citizens from accidental launches or blackmail by rogue nations."

But Bush, perhaps characteristically, did not say precisely what sort of missile-defense system he would try to build. Would it be like Clinton's, except bigger? Would it deploy the Air Force's airborne laser, now in the engineering stage? Would it rely on the Navy's Aegis cruisers but give them enhanced missile and radar capability?

Clinton's decision to defer and Bush's lack of specificity have together had the effect of opening the floor to all bids. "The most prevalent cottage industry in Washington these days," one Administration official says, "is, What's your National Missile Defense architecture?"

Nearly every idea that is presented as an improvement over the current plan involves a system that has the capability of intercepting an enemy rocket in its "boost" phase—that is, in that moment or two after liftoff, when the rocket is hot and slow, making it an easy target, and before it has released any bomblets or decoys. "Boost phase" is suddenly on everyone's lips. Vladimir Putin suggested a cooperative missile-defense system, based in Russia, which would have boost-phase intercept capability. (Some people argue that boost-phase interceptors might even prevent an India-Pakistan nuclear exchange.)

The Heritage Foundation, a conserv-

ative think tank, urges a sea-based approach. Henry Cooper advocates a "layered" defense, employing interceptors on the ground, and in the sea, the air, and space.

To many, the idea of building a defense among the stars remains alluring. Space has great advantages as a platform for missile defense—not least because interceptors directed from a low-earth orbit can, in theory, strike missiles in their boost phase no matter where their launching site is. At the end of the Bush Administration, when the Cold War was over but S.D.I. was still alive, Gregory Canavan proposed that Brilliant Pebbles be remodelled to reflect the diminished Soviet threat. The Pebbles didn't need to be smart enough to autonomously manage a defensive nuclear war in space; they could be dumbed-down to what Canavan called Burros—simple beasts whose task was to take out a missile from a rogue nation or an accidental launch from Russia. In June, R. James Woolsey, the former C.I.A. director, suggested in *The National Review* that Burros could be placed in a low-earth orbit between latitudes, bounding what some call the "Scud belt"—that area of the earth encompassing the four nations considered to be emerging threats—Iran, Iraq, Libya, and North Korea. Russia could be assured that the system was not aimed at its missiles, Woolsey wrote, because most of Russia lies above those latitudes. Further, he suggested, the United States and Russia could sign a new treaty

promising not to deploy missile defenses against each other. If Russia ever again became a true threat, the United States could simply pull out of the treaty.

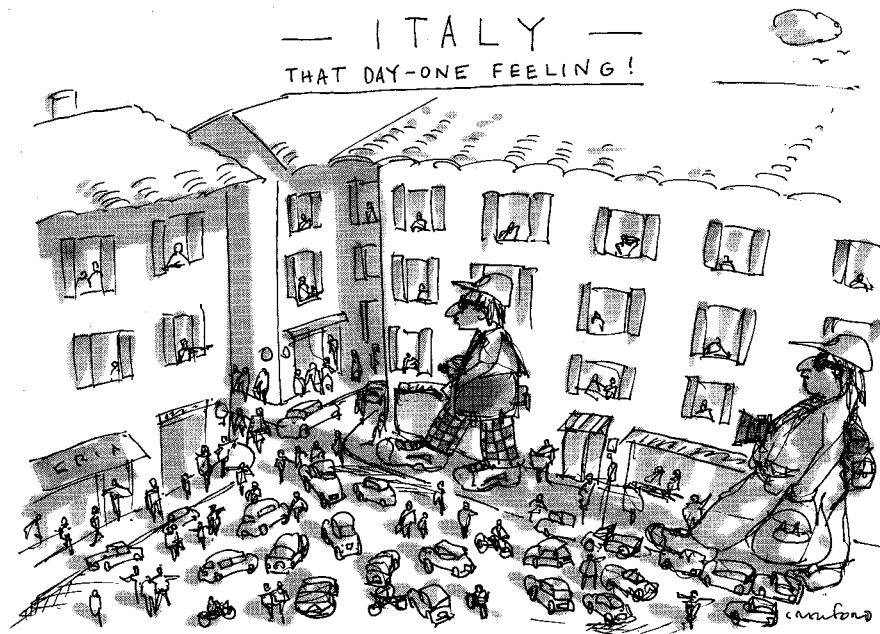
Woolsey's proposal drew much comment, including some criticism from advocates of a muscular missile defense. Henry Cooper, for one, said that he liked the idea of deploying space-based interceptors but couldn't see the purpose of a new treaty that would once again give Russia a veto over our defenses. "Been there, done that," Cooper says.

Donald Rumsfeld says of such criticism, "The subject has become almost theological in Washington—where people, even supporters of missile defense, have organized into blocks against each other. It's like a hair knot."

Although George W. Bush has given the more fevered missile-defense advocates some encouragement, Senator Biden believes that if he actually does get elected his advisers may urge him to be cautious. "Those guys around him are pretty sane," Biden says. "If they decide to go the route of a much expanded system, the price tag is going to go from sixty billion to somewhere in the three-to-four-hundred-billion range. Now, tell me, where's that going to come from?"

As Vice-President, Al Gore had little choice but to sign on to Clinton's proposed system. "The United States faces the real possibility that countries such as North Korea or Iran will succeed in acquiring weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles," he said after last week's announcement. "The President's decision allows time for additional testing of our N.M.D. system. I welcome the opportunity to be more certain that these technologies actually work together properly."

Whoever is inaugurated next January, he will take office having promised to build some sort of national missile-defense system. By then, Bill Clinton will be off beginning his new life and awaiting the assessment of history, which will surely include a passage on the costs and benefits of political triangulation. Clinton's appropriation of Republican issues always annoyed partisans on both sides, but few can argue that it did not create a genuine legacy—it balanced the budget, it reformed welfare, and, in the end, it may well have helped make Ronald Reagan's Star Wars dream a reality. ♦



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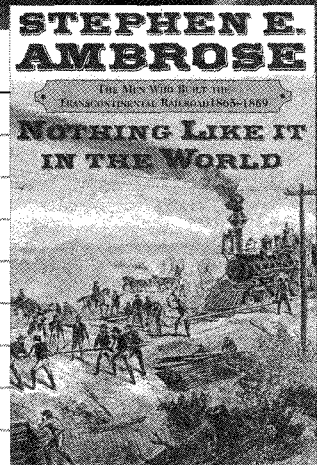
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SHOUTERS

BY STEVE MARTIN

Our fast-paced modern age has made it impractical to read books that are more than a hundred and twenty-six pages long. Yet so many classic books and recently published books are as thick as they are wide. What are we to do? One answer is the Shouters. These are a small number of dedicated people who assign themselves randomly to various individu-

als, follow them around at a respectful distance, and shout out thick, time-consuming literature, sentence by sentence. If you know anyone who has ever had a Shouter, you know there is something remarkably calming about a voice thirty or forty yards away that is speaking aloud, say, "Airport," or "Being and Nothingness." Shouting is also a twenty-four-hour-a-day effort, and as the sun sets, and day is transformed into night, so, too, is the voice transformed, as one Shouter is relieved by another. Sometimes a mellifluous male is replaced with a soothing female at a

chapter change of "Madame Bovary." As one gets ready for bed, the tuneful prose keeps on coming through the bedroom window, and, occasionally, one wakes in the night to hear the voice still reciting, undaunted, from under a neighbor's oak. In the morning, there is yet another new voice and another new chapter, and the meaning of each paragraph drifts



into the consciousness during gargling. At first, having a Shouter makes it hard to concentrate on the work of the day, the phone calls, the meetings, driving—yes, a Shouter will follow your car with a bullhorn—but soon the Shouting blends comfortably into daily life. It becomes easy to exist both in the real world and in the world of literature that is hovering on the periphery. Sometimes it is easy to get confused: Was it Uriah Heep who called? Is Scrooge my accountant? Is my husband out whale-hunting? One executive, whose Shouter had been reciting Proust's

"Remembrance of Things Past" for several weeks, swooned when he bit into a tea cake and remembered every Super Bowl score of the nineteen-eighties. But eventually the brain starts compartmentalizing everything, and life again feels normal. In fact, the constant proximity to the other world, the one that is written about and dreamed about by writers, enhances the world we live in: one's wife seems more beautiful and more complex, a husband more charming and daring.

Shouters have a certain calm about them. They approach their work like Buddhas, in peace and with quiet forcefulness. Becoming a Shouter is a mystical process; one day the Shouter and the Shoutee just find themselves attached. It seems to be a young person's job, and many people in high-powered positions used to be Shouters. It is hard to imagine that the perspiring finance worker in the next cubicle was once standing on a rooftop calling out the final paragraph of "The Good Earth" into the window of a fifth-floor co-op on the Upper East Side, or that the jovial TV newswoman was once on a boat in the Caribbean shouting out "The Brothers Karamazov" as she sailed alongside the corporate yacht Belinda's Bottom.

Who is picked to have a Shouter? It can be anyone, but "overworked" is an adjective that seems to apply to those lucky enough to be selected. Trump, Starr, Tyson are just a few of the busy luminaries whose lives have been subtly altered by Shouters. There may be resistance at first, particularly if an aggressive Shouter leaves paragraphs of Philip Roth on one's voice mail and is often the annoying caller on line three, anxious to finish Chapter 7 of "The Carpetbaggers." But in time the Shouter is accepted. And, amazingly, if several people with Shouters find themselves in the same room, even amid the cacophony each can focus on his Shouter with ease, sometimes listening to two or three novels at the same time with no complications.

A Shouter leaves as quietly as he or she appears, sometimes after a single book has been read aloud, sometimes after several, but never before the job is done and mutual satisfaction has been attained. A Shoutee wakes up in the morning, noticing something is different but unsure of what it is. The orange juice is drunk, the coffee sipped. Is the radio off? The car is started, pulled out of the driveway. The voice is gone. ♦

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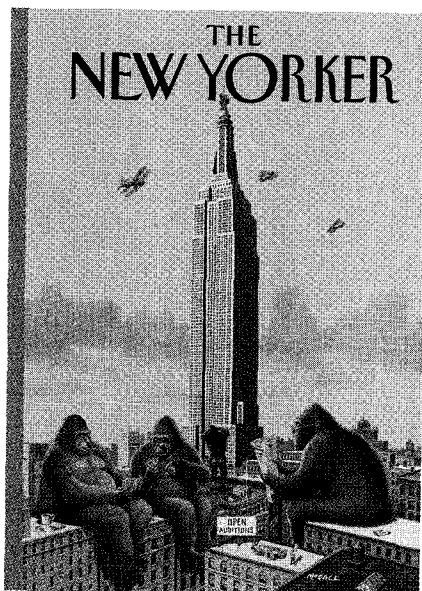
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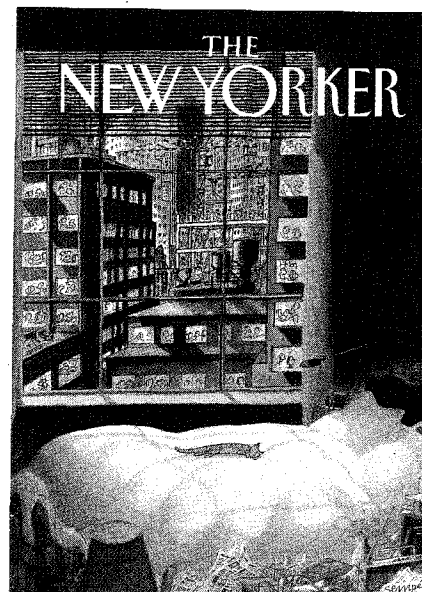
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TROUBLE IN THE TRIBE

How Jewish do American Jews want to be?

BY DAPHNE MERKIN

I've been trying to lose my religion for years now, but it refuses to go away. Just when I think I've shaken it—put it firmly behind me, a piece of my obscurantist past no longer suited to the faithless life I now lead—it turns up again, dogging me. You'd think it would be easy, particularly in a city like New York, where no one cares whether or not you believe in God; even my friends who do would be hard put to explain why, other than by alluding knowingly to Pascal's wager, in which the odds favor the believer. But as the world becomes a more bewildering place almost by the week, I find myself longing for what I thought I'd never long for again: a sense of community in the midst of the impersonal vastness, a tribe to call my own.

To add to my confusion, Joseph Isadore Lieberman, the first Jewish Vice-Presidential candidate of a major party, and Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League, are noisily airing questions that I've been debating internally for decades: How Jewish is too Jewish? Does a public declaration of religious allegiance always come across as self-serving—a sales technique custom-made for the age of identity politics? Whether Lieberman calls himself a Jewish American or an American Jew is a matter of hairsplitting, a preoccupation of the leery. (Will he look out for the country's welfare, or only for the interests of his own kind?) What *is* of significance—to Jews and Gentiles alike—is the fact that Lieberman is observant, a man of religious conviction: he keeps kosher, doesn't turn on lights or travel in a car on Shabbos, and regularly attends synagogue services. In doing so, he has given the beleaguered Modern Orthodox Jewish establishment something to be truly proud about, a reason to kvell. At the Nashville announcement rally, the Connecticut senator exuberantly (or presumptuously, depending on your tolerance for direct appeals to the divine)

invoked God, "maker of all miracles," and praised Gore's "chutzpah" in naming him. Suddenly, the press was brimming with folksy Yiddishisms worthy of Leo Rosten, references to abstruse Jewish concepts, and discussions about whether Lieberman would be able to attend his inauguration, which falls on a Saturday.

As if I didn't have enough conflicts already about having strayed from my Modern Orthodox upbringing, there now looms the temptation to reclaim it and avail myself of ready-made cultural cachet. I can already picture those "revolving-door" Jews, staunch secularists who disdain visible signs of affiliation, suddenly lining up to take a closer look at the quaint religious customs long ago left in the care of tottering relatives in Miami Beach. A few days after Gore announced his choice of a running mate, for instance, I was meeting my mother for dinner at nine. She hadn't eaten for the past twenty-four hours, in observance of the Jewish fast day known as Tishah B'Av. (All Jewish holidays begin and end after sundown.)



Minute variations in Jewish ritual are now the object of national scrutiny.

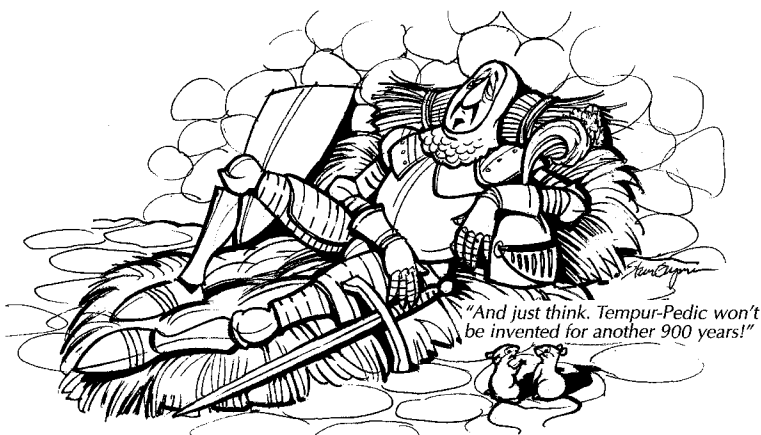
While she was waiting on Park Avenue for me to pick her up in a cab, a well-coiffed neighbor—whose ethnic origins had been obscured by years of Upper East Side polish—asked her why she was going out to eat so late. My mother explained that she had just finished fasting in commemoration of the destruction of the first and second temple, thousands of years ago. The woman looked startled and then commented, with no small degree of chagrin, “I guess we’ll all have to learn about these things now, won’t we?”

It’s difficult to imagine a sustained resurgence of serious interest in either the sober letter or the confining spirit of the law, but for the moment things are looking up for the “frummies”—which is one of the terms that Modern Orthodox Jews use for their less modern compatriots. (Other shorthand designations include “yeshiva-ish,” “charedi,” and “black hats.”) The minute gradations between one subset of observant Judaism and another are suddenly the object of intense national scrutiny, even if they are frequently misunderstood. More irritating to me are the know-it-all remarks of my sedulously lapsed acquaintances to the effect that Lieberman doesn’t wear a yarmulke in the workplace, and that his wife doesn’t cover her hair, as though these practices would in any way disqualify him from being a member in good standing of his synagogue.

In the earliest days of Modern—or, as it is sometimes called, centrist—Orthodox Judaism, the public and private demonstrations of one’s religious beliefs were kept separate, like the dishes for meat and dairy food. As it happens, the Modern Orthodox movement was founded, in the eighteen-fifties in Frankfurt, Germany, by my great-great-grandfather Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, as a response to the increasingly dominant Reform movement. (The fact that I am a direct descendant of Hirsch gives me sterling *yichus*—the Jewish version of lineage, like having a blood relation on the Mayflower.) Hirsch, an influential theologian and community leader who admired Schiller almost as much as he did Maimonides, cautiously embraced modernity while insisting on the obligation to observe Jewish law. His credo, *Torah im Derech Eretz*—Torah Judaism in harmony with secular culture—

MARK ALAN STAMATY

Having a bad knight's sleep?



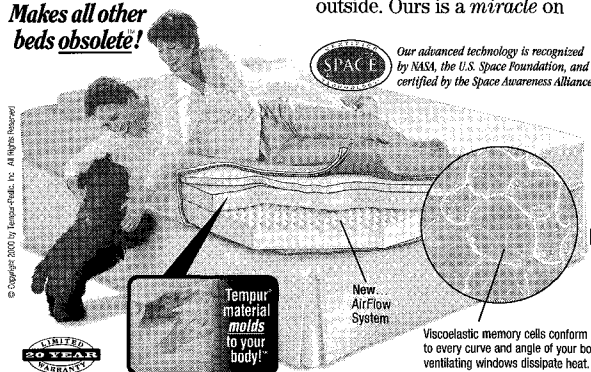
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was a bow in the direction of both God and Germany. Hirsch founded the first modern Jewish day school, which was based on an innovative curriculum of secular and sacred studies. My mother, who attended the school in the thirties, remembers that the boys took off their yarmulkes for secular classes. Although such a radical distinction between church and state is no longer made, Hirsch's educational model remains the inspiration for Jewish day schools in cities across America.

By the mid-fifties, when I was born, Modern Orthodoxy was booming. My five siblings and I went to Ramaz, a Jewish day school on the Upper East Side, where we learned to read and write Hebrew. We were also trained in the advanced decoding skills—a pointillist method of inquiry—that were needed to comprehend the voluminous interpretative texts that had swelled, century by century, around the Old Testament: expansive commentaries, colorful Talmudic parables, and competing Midrashic riffs. Why, for instance, when the Torah ascribes righteousness to Noah, does the narrative qualify the description by specifying that he was a righteous man *for his generation*? Everything, it appeared, had a meaning if one only understood how to tease it out.

At home, we recited the Sh'ma before going to sleep, and said the blessings over everything from breakfast cereal to our evening snack of Educator's Smokey Bear cookies (the kosher version of Oreos). But although my brothers wore the ritual fringes known as *tzitzis* beneath their shirts seven days a week, and went to synagogue on Friday night as well as on Saturday, homogeneity and camouflage were the prevailing themes of the Zeitgeist. Ethnic pride, coming in on the wave of the late sixties, had not yet asserted itself. (The manifestations of specifically Jewish pride—like the wearing of *kippot s'rugot*, crocheted yarmulkes—followed the euphoric Israeli victory in the Six-Day War.) My brothers wouldn't have been caught dead wearing a yarmulke on the crosstown bus, or to a Mets game at Shea Stadium. Even so, my family's uneasy concessions to the wider American world led to inevitable tensions. After my older brother graduated from high school, he was deemed insufficiently pious—mostly on the basis of my mother's claim that she had overheard him listening to

the radio in his room late one Friday night—and was shipped off to Israel, for a corrective program of yeshiva study.

A great deal of the complicated story of modern American Jewry, wherein the lure of assimilation vies with an ingrained tradition of separatism, is recounted by Samuel Freedman in his ambitious new book, "Jew vs. Jew: The Struggle for the Soul of American Jewry" (blurbed, serendipitously, by Senator Lieberman). Freedman, a professor of journalism at Columbia, appears undaunted by the welter of irreconcilable impulses and conflicting reports which awaits anyone who hopes to clarify the recent history of this disputatious bunch. In the author's view, the "ancient bond" that united Jews of every stripe through six thousand years of precarious existence in a hostile world has ceased to do so in a more tolerant one; as the American Jewish community has become increasingly affluent, educated, and successful, its internal divisions have become increasingly rancorous. (Indeed, just contemplating the number of people Freedman must have interviewed—one voluble and tendentious Jew after another, arguing the world—is enough to make a sympathetic reader shudder.)

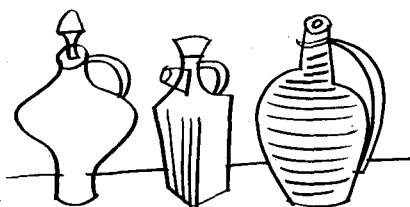
Freedman has organized his book into six thematically linked sections, centered on specific Jewish neighborhoods across the United States where the "crisis of legitimacy" has been escalating over the past four decades. He touches down first in the Catskills of the postwar era, where he evokes the last gasp of a Jewish identity forged in purely ethnic terms: the working-class Farband movement. He captures the essence of the movement's kibbutznik style, with its twin allegiances to Palestine and to socialism, in a quickly sketched portrait of the Labor Zionist summer camp Kinderwelt. The camp, founded in 1925, flourished for almost half a century, on a combination of Yiddishist sentiment and Israeli folk dancing (with a few classic Americanisms such as Color Wars and panty raids thrown into the mix), before it was razed to make way

for a housing development. But, when a small group of Kinderwelt loyalists get together for a reunion in a Manhattan apartment in 1998, Freedman finds that, with one exception (a woman whose son became Orthodox and moved to a settlement on the West Bank), they have only the vaguest notion of Jewishness, and it is predicated mainly on trips to Israel and a lingering collective spirit.

With these scenes, Freedman establishes a context for the often repeated thesis of his book. Ethnic Judaism ("Seinfeld" and a schmeat) has decisively failed, as evidenced by the whopping statistics on intermarriage; at the same time, the Orthodox experience—dismissed in 1955 by one eminent sociologist as "a case study of institutional decay"—is enjoying a wholly unanticipated revival. This shift toward the fundamentalist, God-fearing sort of Judaism is reflected both in the actual demographics (the high birth rate among the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox, especially compared with the stagnant rate among non-observant Jews) and in the reconfiguration of American Jewish identity.

Freedman's milling throng of interviewees includes doom-pronouncing traditionalists; entrenched assimilationists; Conservative and progressive Orthodox leaders committed to the notion of a Jewish life "with wiggle room"; an impassioned wacko or two; and a feminist activist who scandalized her ostensibly enlightened Conservative congregation by including the neglected Biblical matriarchs—Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah—in her invocation of Jewish ancestors. All these disparate figures have felt the effects of the Jewish drift to the right.

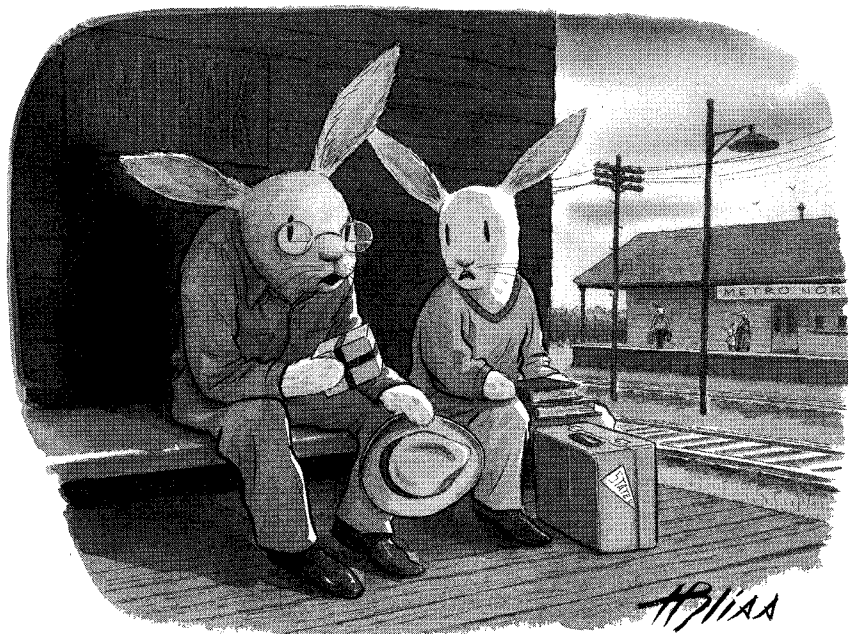
Perhaps the most admirably principled—and, for me, guilt-inducing—character in Freedman's book is Daniel Greer, an Ivy League-educated white-shoe lawyer turned religious-school dean. Greer's trajectory is an example of an intra-community phenomenon known as "flipping"—converting from a more liberal form of Orthodoxy to a more stringent one. Reared in a typical Modern Orthodox Upper West Side home in the forties and fifties, Greer was the first graduate of the Manhattan Talmudic Academy to enter Princeton. He went on to Yale Law School (where he bunked with Jerry Brown), held several high-ranking positions under Mayor Lindsay, ran for local Democratic office, and campaigned



for McGovern—all the while wearing a hat rather than a yarmulke in public. But although his career might appear to be a shining testament to the modern Orthodox ideal of synthesis, Greer became increasingly uncomfortable with the compromises it required. He stopped practicing law, grew his beard, began wearing *tzitzis* outside his clothing, and devoted himself full time to religious leadership and community service. “So many American Jews were first-generation and so concerned with fitting in,” Greer says. “We want to restore a more demonstrative, open, all-encompassing experience.” In 1997, one of his daughters became a litigant in the controversial Yale Five case, in which a small group of Orthodox students brought a lawsuit against the university on the ground of religious discrimination.

At the other end of the spectrum is Harry Shapiro, one of the lost souls who latch on to the ultra-Orthodox movement because they have little else to anchor them. The son of a supermarket-chain executive, Shapiro was a gifted mechanic but an academic failure. While still in his teens, he bought a one-way ticket to Israel, but, even after two attempts, he couldn’t carve out a tenable existence there. Back in New York, he enrolled in a remedial program at Yeshiva University, only to flunk out; he opened a butcher shop in Florida called Kasher Kuts, but the business went under in less than two years. The only bright spot in Harry’s life was his commitment to a fanatically hawkish brand of Zionism, which culminated in a radical but ineffectual gesture of protest. In 1997, he was arrested for placing a homemade bomb in the Jacksonville Jewish Center, on the eve of an appearance by the former Israeli Prime Minister and renowned peacemaker Shimon Peres. Shapiro’s bizarre religious journey landed him in federal prison with a ten-year sentence.

“Jew vs. Jew” is an assiduously researched, up-to-the-minute report, and if it finally fails to cohere in the reader’s mind that may be because it is too faithful a reflection of the dilemma it describes. The author is so intent on gluing together the splintered pieces of a once intact community, so determined to transcribe its babble of voices and views, that his book is at times overrun by its own informational anxiety. After I finished it, I



“Your mother wanted you to have this for good luck. It’s her foot.”

felt relieved to be back on my familiar lonely turf—spiritually bereft, perhaps, but safely beyond the din of battle.

Is it ever too late to reclaim your roots? It seems that everyone with even a smidgen of Jewishness in his or her background is doing just that these days, writing a memoir of salvaged ancestral kinship, with the word “Exile” or “Chosen” or “Journey” somewhere in the title. Among such bittersweet reckonings are Mary Gordon’s “The Shadow Man,” in which the writer learns that her beloved father was a virulently anti-Semitic Jew; Stephen Dubner’s “Turbulent Souls,” wherein the author, having been reared as one of a large Catholic brood by parents who left the synagogue for the Church, reinvents himself as a committed Jew; and Susan Jacoby’s “Half-Jew,” in which a secret family history of religious denial is gradually uncovered.

I have been more moved, however, by memoirs that explore a different transformation, in which the narrator questions the presumptions underlying the enterprise of Jewish assimilation. These include Joshua Hammer’s “Chosen by God” and David Klinghoffer’s “The Lord Will Gather Me In.” Both books offer fascinating glimpses into the growing *ba’al tshuva* movement, in which young men and women from devoutly secularist

backgrounds decide to become practicing Jews. In “Chosen by God,” which is narrated with bewildered and occasionally self-incriminating candor, Hammer attempts to come to terms with this phenomenon as it is exemplified by his younger brother, Tony. The siblings grew up in a cosmopolitan, nonreligious Manhattan household, but Tony eventually rejected their background and was reborn as Tuvia, an ultra-Orthodox Jew. Hammer, a *Newsweek* correspondent, is scrupulously fair, conveying both his initial sense of horror at his brother’s religious makeover—in which Tony, “the most resolute atheist I had known,” comes to resemble “a Hasidic Willy Loman”—and his qualified, begrudging comprehension of his brother’s motives in seeking out an insulated life of study and prayer.

Klinghoffer’s memoir, on the other hand, charts his growing disenchantment with the flabby values and ostentatious life style of the Southern California-style Reform Judaism in which he was reared by his adoptive parents. Klinghoffer was five years old when he was told that neither of his birth parents was Jewish; while still in high school, he decided—in an act worthy of inclusion in Ripley’s “Believe It or Not”—to perform a ritual conversion on himself. He soaped up a razor blade and gingerly cut at his penis until “a very small bead of red” convinced

him that his circumcision was a success, and then immersed himself in a bathtub, allowing the water to cover his face. (He later underwent a real circumcision at the hands of a *mohel*.) The author is a junior-division neoconservative (he is a contributing editor at *National Review*), and his book is marked by a trenchant wit and an astringent refusal to buy into the liberal nostrums on which he was brought up. Although he announces that he is “the only person I know of who came to Orthodox Judaism via Friedrich Nietzsche,” his argument is essentially a fideist one—that the apprehension of a divine presence at work in the world can be explained only on the basis of faith.

I do think that Klinghoffer’s newfound zeal leads him to romanticize certain aspects of his chosen creed; for example, he holds up Orthodox bar-mitzvah celebrations as exemplary occasions of piety and modesty. His own Jewish coming of age, by contrast, is derided as part of an emotionally bankrupt “circuit” involving a “mass expenditure of cash and credit”; a hammy and insipid speech (often written by the bar-mitzvah boy’s mother or father); and a knock-’em-dead theme party, pandering to the pop-cultural obsession of the moment. Having attended mostly Orthodox bar mitzvahs growing up, I can attest that I never had the good fortune to witness the sort he describes, where, after a solemn ceremony, the celebrants “adjourn to the synagogue social hall for pickled herring and shots of whiskey.” This astonishingly humble repast sounds to me like a story out of I. L. Peretz or Sholom Aleichem, but then isn’t it the disillusioned who are most in need of someone or something to idealize?

While reading Hammer and Klinghoffer’s memoirs, I tried to envision myself as a kind of double-jointed female returnee, a *ba’alat tshuva* whose odyssey is a curvy variation on the usual linear pattern—a journey from A to B and then back again to A. It’s precisely the doubling back on myself that I have trouble with, however, the undoing of accommodations that, for better or worse, I have made. I try to imagine myself bidding goodbye to worldly friends and wanton pleasures, voluntarily tethering myself to outmoded rituals and circumscribed possibilities. But it feels, even at this hypothetical distance, too much like playacting, as though I were an understudy in “Fiddler on the Roof,” tying a kerchief

under my chin and taking care of the younger children while waiting for the matchmaker to make me the perfect match.

I suppose some part of me has always thought of my twenty-odd years of religious uncertainty as a passing phase, something I had to wade through in order to get to the other side—which would prove to be, like the most elegant of Zen constructs, my beginning in another guise. But how long can a phase last before it calcifies into a permanent condition?

I’ve been at play in the fields of heresy since the end of my third year in high school, when I walked into Zum Zum, part of a German chain famous for its nitrate-heavy delicacies. It was a fine June day, shortly before I was to go off to work as a junior counsellor at Morasha, a strictly Orthodox summer camp, where the boys and girls weren’t permitted to swim together. I had always liked everything about Zum Zum, from its faux-pewter plates to its hearty Heidi-influenced aesthetic, complete with waitresses dressed in dirndl skirts and aprons. Now I sat down at the counter with its little clay pots of mustard, “Das Hot” and “Das Sweet,” and ordered myself a hot dog—an unkosher hot dog—on a caraway-seed bun, accompanied by nicely seasoned potato salad, pepper-flecked sauerkraut, and a tart pickle. It was a revolutionary moment, and by rights I should have been jumping out of my skin. But I wasn’t; my hands were steady and my heart was beating at its usual pace. I took my time, savoring every bite.

After this momentous transgression, I quickly reverted to a Morasha girl-camper persona. We *davened* the *shachris* service first thing every morning, clumped together on hard benches in the camp’s makeshift shul, having been yanked awake by the Hebrew imprecation to “*Kumu, kumu*” (arise, arise) coming over the loudspeaker, followed by blaring Israeli dance music. Given that we were all normal sex-driven teen-agers, as well as good Jews in

the making, the hot topic of *negiyah*—the prohibition on physical contact between unmarried men and women—dominated the late-night conversations. That summer, I myself indulged in my first, highly publicized French kiss, which led to a private talk with my agitated counsellor about the ethics of desire.

I felt least ambivalent about my religion when I listened to the merry band of counsellors turned musicians who regaled us daily, and who were, indeed, one of the camp’s main attractions. The band, made up of Yeshiva University college students with names like Label, Eli, and Yitzi, performed what I thought of as inspired music, consisting of melancholy but punchy tunes based on a few minor chords and lyrics from the Hebrew liturgy. To the extent that I believed in something called a soul—I waffled on this, just as I waffled on the idea of God—I felt my soul being wrenched as I listened. I floated upward—away from my resistance to a system that seemed more concerned with tiresome strictures and sexist rabbinical rulings than with virtues like kindness and empathy—and found myself on a cloud of benign camaraderie. This, then, was the real thing, the gratification that awaited you if you bought into the whole kit and caboodle, from keeping kosher to sitting shivah. These were my people, after all, and for a brief while I wanted to be one of them.

Such havens in the wilderness of my disaffection became increasingly rare, as I veered between an escalating strategy of religious defiance and passing myself off as an uncorrupted product of an Orthodox upbringing. My real break came while I was at Barnard; since it was my parents’ conviction that an out-of-town college would end their control over my religious life, I effected my rebellion while remaining close to home, practically under their very noses. I moved on from Zum Zum hot dogs to Szechuan dumplings and Indian curries, swooning over the sheer abandon of being able to order anything on a menu that caught my fancy. In the middle of all this, I opted to live in one of Barnard’s kosher suites, with four other girls. My suitemates hailed from Queens or Brooklyn, homey boroughs that I chauvinistically supposed to present less of a temptation to stray than Manhattan. Instead of taking part in the bacchanalias of sex and drugs that the rest of the campus was



presumably enjoying, they made Friday-night dinners to which they invited Orthodox Columbia boys. If I didn't go home for Shabbos, I joined them.

I felt like an impostor, but I would have felt like an impostor among the non-Orthodox. My frame of reference, beginning with something as basic as the calendar, was marked not by Thanksgiving turkeys or Christmas trees but by the mostly solemn round of Jewish holidays, characterized by endless services, heavy meals, and long quiescent afternoons. Rosh Hashanah was followed by Yom Kippur, which was followed by Succos, Chanukah and then by Purim, Pesach, and Shavuot (which no one had heard of outside the tight circle of the initiated). Truth be told, the flight into freedom seemed as threatening as it was alluring. I feared being overcome by vertigo—falling off the end of the earth, with no one to catch me. What if it turned out that my early training had left me fundamentally unequipped for a world of wide-open spaces? What if I was so imprinted by dogma that I needed the very narrowness against which I strained?

It went on like this for years, daring violation followed by guilty compliance. In retrospect, I wonder that my flimsy on-again, off-again self didn't simply rip in two, like a piece of paper. It wasn't that I believed in an angry God, looking down at me with a face like Abraham Lincoln's and plotting his revenge. It wasn't that I feared parental rejection, either, although I'm not sure my father ever knew the extent of my sacrilege. (He surely didn't know that I had begun to make it a habit to eat on Yom Kippur and once, in an especially angry period, felt an urgent need for a manicure.) What haunted me was an insistent and morbid sense that I was an outcast—albeit by choice, which only made it worse. I had willed myself into a cold and dark hallway, inches away from a closed door. I could see the light spilling out from underneath it, and if I could just bring myself to open the door and step inside I would come upon some semblance of earthly grace, an imposed order that would feel natural if only I surrendered myself to it.

I've been nonpracticing for more years than I've been Orthodox, but, come Friday evening, wherever I am and whatever I'm doing, I'm always aware

that Shabbos is starting. This awareness goes beyond simple nostalgia, yet I have been unable to find an adult definition of Jewishness which I can reconcile with the rigorous standards of my childhood. I have gone once or twice to services at a Reform temple that is affiliated with my daughter's school, and I can't get used to any of it: the mixed seating, the music, the recitation of prayers in English, even the word "temple" instead of "shul."

Recently, I have begun thinking about making the kitchen in my next apartment kosher. My daughter, who is ten, has wanted us to become more religious for a while now; this summer, she asked me to arrange extra Hebrew lessons for her. I'm sure that some of her interest has been spurred by her desire to *daven* and *bench* along with her first cousins (all nineteen of them), who are being brought up in observant households. But I also think some of it has to do with her own proclivities, just as my discomfort with Orthodoxy had to do with mine. Although part of me balks at the idea of having a child who hankers after a tradition I have spent half a lifetime throwing away, another part feels something resembling pride. When I mentioned these developments to an older friend of mine, an avowedly atheistic Jew from a Camp Kinderwelt sort of background, she reacted with undisguised horror, as though I had declared my intention to join a deranged militant sect in Nebraska. "You're not serious," she said. I shrugged the subject off, slightly embarrassed.

I still have time to scrap my plan to keep kosher—to review the situation in all its unappealing aspects—but I'm not waiting for one of those transcendent, "Aha!" moments to strike, bringing with it a vision of the eternal. I'm not that kind of person, nor is my religion that kind of religion. Judaism is nothing if not down to earth in its approach, and sets more store by behavior than by belief. It's either a weakness in me or a strength—I haven't decided—that I still haven't figured out where I stand on so consequential a matter as the quality of my Jewish life. But if I should happen to die before I've made up my mind I'm counting on my family to give me an Orthodox burial. ♦

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THE HELL-RAISER

Steve Dunleavy, a tabloid legend, wages a crusade to defend the indefensible.

BY JOHN CASSIDY

The New York *Post* columnist Steve Dunleavy keeps a desk just off the paper's newsroom, in an anonymous skyscraper on Sixth Avenue and Forty-seventh Street, but Langan's, an Irish bar just down the block, is his real office. The hostelry provides him with an answering service ("Sorry, he's not in yet, but he should be in later," I was told one afternoon when I called), space and privacy to conduct interviews, freedom to consume unlimited Parliament Lights (Andrea Peyser, a fellow-columnist who sits near Dunleavy at the *Post*, objects to his smoking), a willing audience for his monologues, copious amounts of alcohol, and decent food. Dunleavy, who is sixty-two, makes use of all these amenities on a regular basis, except the last one. In the five years that he has been going to Langan's, according to one employee, he has been spotted eating just once—a bowl of onion soup, ordered, quite possibly, in error. The ability to subsist on a diet largely restricted to alcohol and tobacco adds to the rakish image Dunleavy has cultivated during almost half a century in the news business, and so does his face, which is creased like an old pair of leather shoes. One evening earlier this summer, I walked into Langan's and picked him out at his favorite booth, a quiet one by the men's room. I hadn't seen Dunleavy much since 1995, when I quit the *Post*, where I had been an editor for a couple of years, but he had changed little. He was smartly dressed, in a gray three-piece suit, white monogrammed shirt with French cuffs, gold cufflinks, red silk tie, and shiny black shoes. His pallor was that of a rotting cod. His silver pompadour, which makes him resemble an aging Elvis impersonator, shot from his crown in glorious defiance of taste and gravity.

Facing Dunleavy across the table were two burly younger men with thick necks, buzz-cut hair, slim mustaches, and tiny goatees. They were both dressed

in sneakers and bluejeans, and had tight T-shirts stretched across their biceps. They even had the same first name: Thomas Bruder and Thomas Wiese. "Hello, mate, say hello to a couple of faggot cops," Dunleavy said in a thick Australian accent when I went over and introduced myself. I ordered a beer and sat down. Dunleavy was drinking a vodka-and-tonic. His companions were devouring cheeseburgers.

Bruder and Wiese, who both live on Long Island, used to be cops in the Seventieth Precinct, in Brooklyn. Their police careers effectively ended in the early morning of August 9, 1997, when Abner Louima, a Haitian immigrant, was beaten and sodomized with a broken broom handle in a bathroom at the precinct's station house. Justin Volpe, a pug-faced former colleague of Bruder and Wiese's, pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting Louima and is serving thirty years in prison. Bruder and Wiese, who were both on duty when the attack took place, were convicted earlier this year of lying to investigators in order to cover up the role played by another cop, Charles Schwarz, who has been found guilty of holding down Louima while Volpe attacked him. Before coming to Langan's to meet Dunleavy, Bruder and Wiese had seen their lawyers about their sentencing, which was due to take place a few weeks later. "They told us to pack our sneakers," Bruder said grimly. "We're going down." Dunleavy looked even glummer than Bruder and Wiese. "You guys are going to jail and it breaks my heart," he muttered into his cocktail.

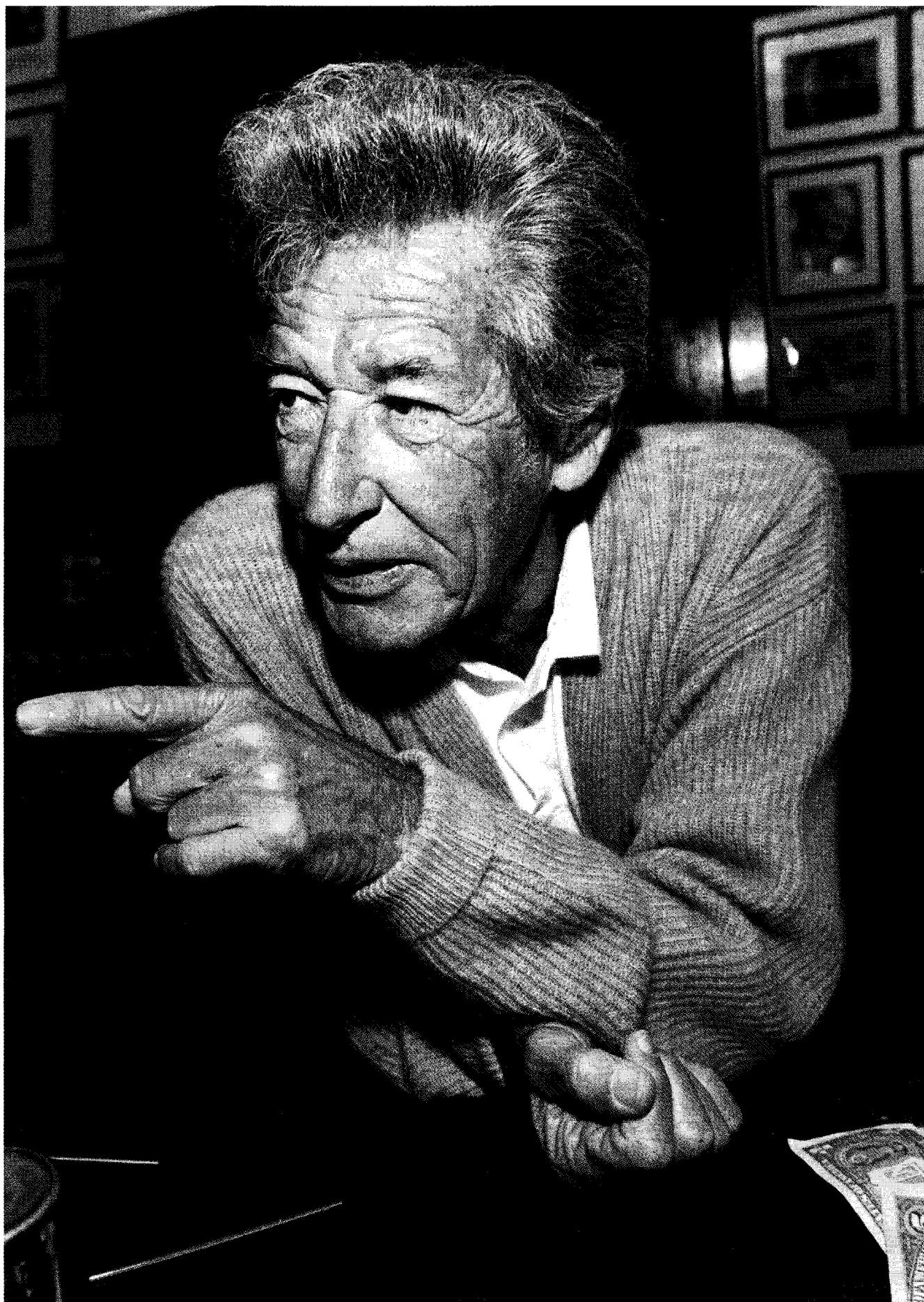
Dunleavy has written dozens of columns professing the innocence of Bruder, Wiese, and Schwarz, who is already in jail. He has also invited Bruder and Wiese to his house, in Lido Beach, Long Island, cooked them steaks, handed them beers, and, after they left, called up their lawyers and harangued them for not doing enough. "He's the angel," Wiese

told me without a hint of irony. "He's the only guy in the last three years who has had the guts to write the truth. I keep all of Steve's articles in a scrapbook, not for me but for my kids. When they say, 'What's going on, Dad?' I say, 'Read these articles, because this is the truth.'" Dunleavy seemed grateful for this tribute. "If I thought for one minute that these guys were guilty, I'd run a mile," he said. According to Dunleavy's version of events, Volpe carried out the brutal assault by himself, and the other cops in the Seventieth Precinct were innocent bystanders. Two juries have rejected this story, but Dunleavy repeated it again in the *Post* two days later in another column about Bruder and Wiese. "These guys did nothing, zilch," he wrote. And he went on:

It is so easy to indict a cop, lock him or her up, on the merest allegation, and pronounce you're doing your civic duty. It's a filthy crying shame, and one day society will suffer for this idiocy.

The ending to the column sounded familiar: "This whole case has broken my heart."

Bruder and Wiese are by no means the only cops whom Dunleavy has defended in his longshoreman's English in recent years. Others include the four police officers involved in the shooting of Amadou Diallo; Tom Kennedy, a Harlem sergeant charged with assaulting a suspect; Vincent Davis, a Bronx transit cop who was jailed for obstructing justice; and Patricia Feerick, a lieutenant who was convicted of conducting an illegal drug raid in East Harlem. Dunleavy's emergence as the N.Y.P.D.'s most fervent supporter—even Mayor Giuliani criticizes the department occasionally—is the latest twist in a career that began ten thousand miles away, on the copy desk of the Sydney *Sun*, in 1952. Dunleavy is one of the most noto-



Dunleavy in Langan's bar. "Mate, I've never had a bad day in journalism in my life." Photograph by Harry Benson.



"A death mask, Ms. Barrow, with copies to all department heads."

rious tabloid journalists of his generation, a self-styled conservative antihero renowned for drinking, brawling, and seducing his way across three continents. He joined the *Post* in the nineteen-seventies, shortly after Rupert Murdoch bought the paper. A decade later, he switched to Murdoch's fledgling Fox television network and worked on "A Current Affair," a garish nightly news magazine. Dunleavy was accused then of trying to debase not merely one media outlet but an entire culture of broadcast journalism. Tom Shales, the Washington *Post's* television critic, called Dunleavy "a sleaze." To the *Times*, "A Current Affair" was "nothing short of vile." The apotheosis of Dunleavy-bashing came in 1994, when Oliver Stone, the Hollywood film director, used him as a model for Wayne Gale, the repulsive tabloid hack in "Natural Born Killers."

Dunleavy has never paid much heed to what he once termed the "tweed jacket and pipe" crowd. He returned to the *Post* in 1995, and by this time the lurid, personality-driven brand of journalism he helped create had become a growth industry, encompassing everything from *People* to "Dateline NBC." With so many journalists covering tabloid news, Dunleavy needed a new role. He found it in acting as the public de-

fender of accused cops and other politically incorrect causes, such as smoking and gun ownership. After Patrick Dorismond, an unarmed black man, was shot dead by a cop outside a midtown bar earlier this year, even the *Post's* editorial page, the most conservative in the city, criticized the police department's release of Dorismond's juvenile arrest record; Dunleavy refused to do likewise.

"Do I write bad things about cops? No. There are better reporters than me who can do that," he said when I asked about his response to the Dorismond case. "If a reporter like Liz Smith continually, accurately, and decently is a champion of gays and lesbians, what is wrong with me being the champion for the most beaten-up minority in the freakin' world?" he went on. "Now, the critics who say, 'You are a Johnny One Note,' they have a point, I admit that. But there hasn't been a Johnny One Note in history to stick up for the cops—cops who are shot at, attacked, pissed on, and reviled by everybody. The peculiar thing is it turned out to be a foreigner."

Dunleavy was born in Sydney's Bondi Beach in 1938. His attitudes still reflect his upbringing in a city that was, in some ways, a small-scale replica of the old New York he idolizes. Sydney in

the nineteen-forties and fifties was a white, working-class city, with lots of crime and violence, but also with a clear division between law-abiding citizens and criminals, one largely unencumbered by race. Dunleavy grew up in a tough neighborhood, where he developed a lifelong fascination with hoodlums. "There were the Reilly brothers, the Ferguson family, and Pretty Boy Walker, who got machine-gunned at Peter's Corner," he told me during one of several encounters at Langan's. "I knew them all pretty well." Dunleavy lived with his parents, his grandmother, and his uncle Bill, a First World War veteran whose hand was blown off at Flanders. "We may have been broke, but I didn't know I was broke," Dunleavy said. "We always had dogs and cats, and stuff like that. And lots of smoking and drinking. Lots of it. No doubt about that."

Dunleavy's father was a photographer for the Sydney *Sun*, a local tabloid. At fourteen, Dunleavy left school and joined his dad's paper as a copyboy. Soon after, he moved to the rival Sydney *Daily Mirror*, and in 1954 he was made a cub reporter. The Australian tabloids were modelled on their scrappy British equivalents, with endless space devoted to crime, sports, and gossip. Competition for stories was fierce, and few tactics were barred in their pursuit. Reporters moved around town with their own drivers and photographers. "I lost count of the number of times I posed as a cop, a public servant or a funeral director," Dunleavy later told William Shawcross, Murdoch's biographer. Dunleavy started on the crime desk, and it was there that he first came into daily contact with cops. "There was a guy named Ray Kelly, who was head of detectives," he said to me. "Kelly was from County Kerry—blue eyes, black hair parted in the middle. He liked to bust bad guys, but he thought the courts were too slow, so he would blow their brains out." Dunleavy stopped and chuckled at the memory. "But he only killed the guilty."

Even as a cub reporter, Dunleavy would go to any lengths to get his byline published. Once at a night club, he approached Ava Gardner and she threw a glass of champagne in his face. Dunleavy returned to the office and wrote a story that began, "Last night, I shared a glass of champagne with Ava Gardner. She

threw it; I wore it." Another time, Dunleavy found himself competing against his father on a story about hikers lost in the Blue Mountains, north of Sydney. According to the folklore that surrounds him, Dunleavy let the air out of the tires on his father's car in order to prevent the *Sun* from beating the *Mirror* to the scoop. Dunleavy insisted that this tale was "a bit worn around the edges." "It was the driver—a guy named Curly Bramble—who gave me the shiv. And I didn't know it was my father's car." But Dunleavy's father held him responsible, and a couple of years later he exacted his revenge.

"There was a horrible criminal called the Kingsgrove Slasher," Dunleavy recalled. "His thing was to go into the bedroom where a man and wife were sleeping, slash the wife's breasts, then wait for the husband to wake up before jumping out the window. He liked the chase. It turned out that he was a very good runner for the Botany Harriers.

"One time, the cops thought they had cornered him in a particular area of town. The houses all had laundry rooms outside the back. I went into one, where I thought the Slasher might be hiding. I was determined to catch him single-handedly. Next thing, I hear a dead bolt turn behind me. My father had locked me in. I was trapped for hours. When I got out, I went home and said, 'Dad, you could have got me fired.' He said, 'Remember the Blue Mountains.'"

In 1959, Dunleavy moved to Hong Kong, where he worked for the South China *Morning Post*. In the ensuing seven years, he freelanced his way through Tokyo, Calcutta ("I nearly starved to death"), Athens, Milan, and Madrid ("Franco was still alive, God bless his soul"). Eventually, he reached Fleet Street, where he worked for United Press International. The job was straightforward, and the famous Fleet Street pubs, such as the Punch, the Mucky Duck, and El Vino's, were close by, but, what with the rain and the low wages received by English journalists, Dunleavy decided that Swinging London wasn't for him. "I was getting paid two pounds over the Fleet Street minimum," he told me. "I'd spend it all in two nights on the piss." On December 31, 1966, Dunleavy arrived at J.F.K. with, he insists, ten dollars in his pocket. He walked to a coffee shop near the airport, where he met a

woman who took him in for a few days. "She'd been an airline stewardess, but that was a long time ago," he said. The woman gave Dunleavy the taxi fare to the city. He went to the Daily News Building on Forty-second Street, which then housed the New York bureaus of U.P.I. and of Murdoch's Australian papers. Dunleavy hadn't worked for Murdoch previously, but with the help of Neal Travis—now a fellow-columnist at the *Post*—he got some freelance shifts, and after a few months he was offered a full-time job. "That was November, 1967. I've worked for the Boss ever since," he said.

Earlier this summer, I went back to the *Post* for the first time since I left. When I reached Dunleavy's cubicle, he was being interviewed by a producer from the History Channel about the Boston Strangler case, a story he covered some thirty years ago. Jack Newfield, the former *Village Voice* writer, sits next to Dunleavy. Despite opposing political views, the two columnists get on well. "We spend hours talking about the fights," Newfield, a boxing enthusiast, told me. "We share the same view of Don King, we both like the police, and we're both interested in gangsters. Also, we're both basically reporters." Dunleavy and Andrea Peyser, who sits two cubicles away, get on less well, perhaps because they are duelling conservative voices.

While I was chatting with Newfield, a pasty-faced young man with greasy hair and dark clothes emerged from the newsroom and sidled up to Dunleavy's desk.

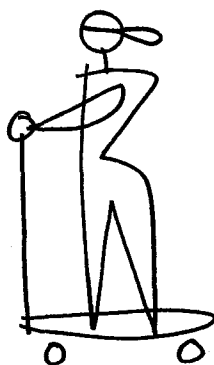
"Ollie, how are you, mate?" Dunleavy shouted to him, breaking away from his interview. "Are they still trying to nail you?"

Ollie turned out to be Oliver Jovanovic, a former Columbia graduate student who was jailed in 1998 for abducting and sexually abusing a young woman he had met on the Internet. The so-called

"Cybersex Rape" case, with racy details of bondage and sado-masochism, kept the headline writers at the *News* and the *Post* happy for months, but Dunleavy labelled it a farrago from the start. The story offered him the opportunity to lash out at three of his favorite targets: feminists, prosecutors, and judges, all of whom had conspired to imprison an innocent man, he argued. When Jovanovic's conviction was thrown out on appeal, Dunleavy was triumphant. "The judge fucked up, the prosecution fucked up, and it was all a bunch of shit. That's it in plain English," he told me after he had finished his television interview and we had moved across the street to Langan's. "Ollie didn't do anything wrong. The woman admitted on the stand that she walked into his room and stripped naked. He didn't even get laid. Mate, I think he was terrified by her sexual aggressiveness."

Jovanovic had come to see Dunleavy because the prosecutors were considering a fresh attempt to get his appeal reversed. If they succeeded, he could end up back in the cell where he had spent twenty months. Dunleavy bought Jovanovic a pint of Guinness and promised to read the pile of legal briefs that he had brought along with him. "A lot of people who didn't go to the trial don't know what really happened," Jovanovic said. "He"—Dunleavy—"does."

That the courts are locking up the wrong people, and not locking up enough of the right ones, is a favorite refrain of Dunleavy and his colleagues on the *Post*. They have even created a logo, "Junk Justice," which they regularly attach to pieces about the criminal-justice system. The impact of this barrage is unclear, but some people on the front lines detect casualties. "Steve Dunleavy has no idea of the evil he does in the world," David Feige, a supervising attorney of the Bronx Defenders, a non-profit group that provides lawyers for poor defendants, said a few weeks back. "I frequently see judges imprisoning black people who should be set free, because they"—the judges—"are frightened of being attacked in the *Post*." Former governor Mario Cuomo agrees that the outpourings of Dunleavy and his colleagues sometimes hamper justice. "They treat the judges as politicians, and the result is that some judges act like politicians by trying to please people," Cuomo said. "That's the last



thing you want to happen.” But Cuomo, who helped save the *Post* from closure several times, only to have the paper turn against him in the 1994 gubernatorial election, said he didn’t dislike Dunleavy. “In every other way than his aberrant and perverse political opinions, he’s a typical New Yorker,” Cuomo said. “He’s feisty, he’s resilient, he’s self-made, he stands up for what he believes in, and he can even, on occasion, be charming.”

From 1967 to 1973, Dunleavy worked as a New York correspondent for Murdoch’s Australian and British titles, covering the big stories of the day and imparting what is known on Fleet Street as “topspin.” When, in 1969, Ted Kennedy claimed he had swum from Chapapaquiddick to Edgartown after fleeing the fatal car accident on the Dyke Bridge, many local people said it couldn’t be done: the currents were too strong. Dunleavy plunged into the sea, crawled his way across the five-hundred-foot channel, and declared it an easy swim, thereby buttressing at least part of Kennedy’s story. After Albert DeSalvo, an imprisoned Massachusetts sex offender, claimed to be the Boston Strangler, Dunleavy interviewed him in jail and pronounced him an impostor.

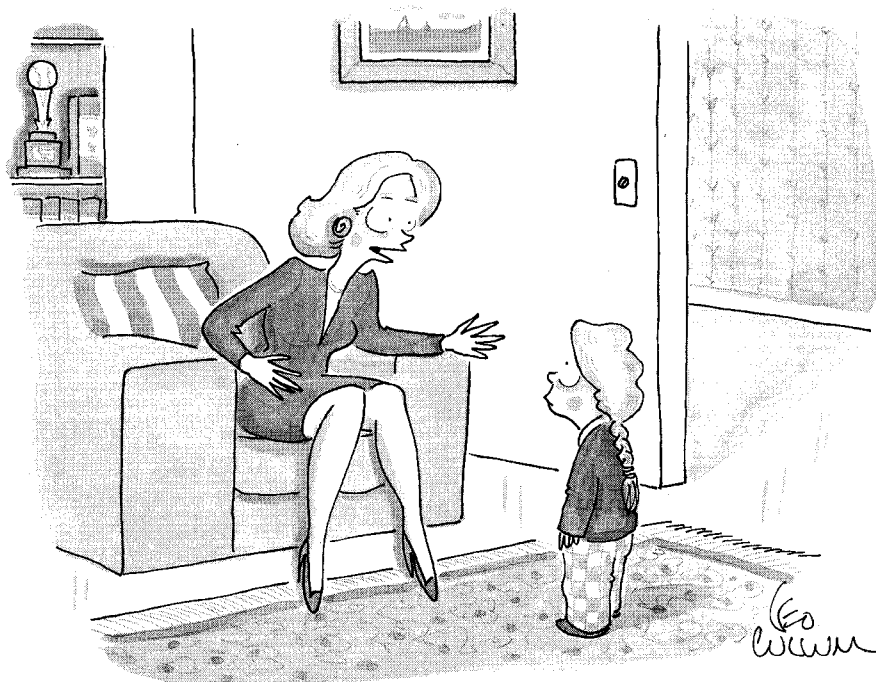
In 1973, Rupert Murdoch arrived in New York, to launch the *National Star* (later shortened to the *Star*), a super-

market tabloid modelled on the immensely profitable *National Enquirer*. Murdoch was eager to expand his holdings on this side of the Atlantic, but previous attempts to buy a big American publication had been rebuffed, so he decided to found his own. Convinced that most American journalists were hopelessly elitist, he imported some of the streetwise talent he had fostered in Australia and England. Dunleavy became the *Star*’s news editor and, later, its senior columnist. Murdoch initially acted as his own editor, choosing stories, laying out front pages, and frequently ripping them up at the last minute. His willingness to pay for stories when necessary, a practice frowned on in mainstream journalism, particularly impressed Dunleavy. “When there were buyups, he’d say, ‘Go for it,’” Dunleavy recalled. Murdoch was equally taken with his flamboyant countryman, and the two struck up a friendship that has lasted almost thirty years. “He’s one of the hardest-working journalists I’ve ever seen,” Murdoch told me a few weeks ago, from Los Angeles, where he was receiving radiation treatment for prostate cancer. “He absolutely lives for scoops, and to get his name on them.” When Dunleavy’s father was dying of lung cancer, in 1975, Murdoch made sure Dunleavy was given a round-trip ticket to Sydney and a thousand dollars in cash, a gesture Dunleavy still remembers with

gratitude. Murdoch has even tried several times to stop Dunleavy’s drinking, but without much success. “He can be infuriating, but that doesn’t spoil one’s affection for him,” Murdoch said.

The early years at the *Star* were tough. Murdoch had underestimated the task of distributing a national publication in a country as vast as the United States, and the *Star* was unavailable in many areas. The turning point came in 1977, when Piers Ackerman, another Australian recruit, learned that Elvis Presley’s former bodyguards might be willing to talk about his drug use in return for money. A fee of a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars was agreed upon, and Dunleavy flew out to California for a series of tell-all interviews. In just two months, he produced “Elvis: What Happened?,” a three-hundred-page book packed with salacious details about Presley’s private life. Serialization of the book in the *Star* began the very day before Presley was found dead at Graceland. “The circulation went from two million to three million in a week,” Ian Rae, a Fox News executive who was then editor of the *Star*, recalled. “We never looked back.” Dunleavy’s book became a best-seller, but he received only a flat fee of thirty thousand dollars, which he put toward the purchase of the house in Lido Beach. He wasn’t bitter. “Mate, I’ve never had a bad day in journalism in my life,” he said. “You win, you get drunk because you won. You lose, you get drunk because you lost.”

Dunleavy’s fondness for alcohol is a throwback to the days when reporters emerged from John Adams High School, not Princeton, and drank like stevedores, not lawyers. In his early years in New York, he spent a lot of time at Costello’s, a bar on the East Side that was crawling with British and Australian hacks. He was married—first to a fellow Aussie journalist, Yvonne Dunleavy, who ghostwrote “The Happy Hooker,” then to his current wife, Gloria—but domesticity took second place to carousing. On one occasion that has passed into tabloid legend, a group of reporters had gathered at Elaine’s, the media hangout on Second Avenue at Eighty-eighth Street. “It was midwinter, and there was snow everywhere,” George Gordon, a former correspondent for the London *Daily Mail*, recalled recently. “There was a young



“Of course your daddy loves you. He’s on Prozac—he loves everybody.”

Australian journalist who had brought along his fiancée, an attractive Norwegian shipping heiress. She and Dunleavy got into a conversation. Eventually, somebody said, 'Let's go to a bar across the street,' and we all went over. When we got there, everybody in the bar had flocked to this huge picture window. They were watching Dunleavy and the fiancée humping in the snow, arses going up and down. As we were watching, a snowplow came up the street and ran over Dunleavy's foot. By this time, the entire bar was in uproarious laughter. Dunleavy limped in and rolled down his sock to reveal this big blackened limb. He was so loaded that it didn't matter, but as the night wore on even he said there was something wrong. We called an ambulance, and he checked into a local hospital. He'd broken his foot." Antics like this didn't impress everybody. When somebody relayed the story of Dunleavy's fracture to Pete Hamill, he replied, "I hope it wasn't his writing foot."

One day earlier this summer, the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, the main police union, held a rally in Battery Park, which features a memorial for officers killed in the line of duty. By the time I got there, several thousand off-duty cops had gathered to listen to a series of speakers, including Patrick Lynch, the president of the P.B.A., and Andra Schwarz, the wife of the jailed Charles Schwarz. They were carrying posters that said things like "Cops Are People Too!" and "Our Cops: Still the Finest." I found Dunleavy next to a flatbed truck that was being used as a stage, where he was being treated like a visiting dignitary. A group of cops from the Midtown South command, who were standing nearby, struck up a chorus of "Steve for President."

The speakers complained that the cops were unappreciated by the public, the media, and even the Mayor. The police union's contract expired on July 31st, but the Giuliani administration is refusing to give the cops the big raise they think they deserve. Twenty-five years ago, New York cops were among the highest paid in the country. Today, with an average salary of about forty-three thousand dollars, they lag well behind their counterparts in New Jersey and on Long Island. "That's the core of the cur-



rent discontent in the department and the lack of pride," Eddie Burns, a former spokesman for the N.Y.P.D., told me as the speeches continued. "All this other stuff, race and brutality, has been with this force for years. I remember, before I even joined the department, a cop shot a black kid who had a gun and there were riots. They called it a race riot. That was 1965. Thirty-five years ago. We're reliving the same bullshit now."

Burns, the father of Ed Burns, the filmmaker, met Dunleavy in 1976, when he was at Police Headquarters downtown and Dunleavy would call from the *Post*, which was then nearby on South Street. "Steve is really sort of a cop," Burns said. "He has more friends who are cops than who are journalists." This may be true. All the same, I had to wonder why an avowed conservative and union-basher would enthusiastically applaud a rabble-rousing speech by the head of the P.B.A., which is what Dunleavy was doing. "These guys are different—they've been given a really raw deal," he explained unconvincingly. In fact, as his column the following day made clear, Dunleavy pursues his pro-cop crusade with little regard for intellectual consistency or balance. After a tear-jerking description of the rally, the column ended:

I get many nasty calls from people—well, punks—threatening my life calling me a cop lover. You think that is an insult? Well, these wackos who called were right.

Try dialing 911 the next time you get in trouble—and telling the cops how much you hate them.
Right.

Dunleavy is paid to have strong views, but his refusal to countenance any criticism of the N.Y.P.D. has alienated even some of his supporters. "I can't come within four miles of him on this—it's insane what he's writing," Jimmy Breslin croaked down the phone to me a while back. "Hero cops. They went on a fuckin' sitdown strike in the park. Fuck them. They're on the city payroll. If they don't like it, let them go somewhere else." Breslin, who writes for *Newsday*, was referring to the events in Central Park following the Puerto Rican Day Parade, when the cops, who were out in force, appeared to do nothing as mobs of young men taunted and groped dozens of women. A few weeks before this conversation, Breslin, who has worked opposite Dunleavy on hundreds of stories over the past three decades, had told me how much he liked the *Post* columnist and admired his work ethic. But he'd called me up to distance himself after reading a column Dunleavy had written exonerating the cops in Central Park. "Defender of the cops!" he roared. "That's bullshit. What about the fuckin' reader? Steve's a nice fellow and all, but I wish he'd think it through."

In reply to such criticism, Dunleavy points out that, in several cases, he has

been vindicated by the courts: the Diallo cops and Tom Kennedy were found not guilty; Vincent Davis's conviction was overturned on appeal; Patricia Feerick's sentence was quashed by Governor George Pataki. But Dunleavy's record is far from perfect. In the early stages of the Louima case, he proclaimed Justin Volpe's innocence—a blunder he attributes in part to knowing Volpe's father, who was also a member of the N.Y.P.D., and refusing to believe that the son of an honest cop could act so inhumanely. Whether Dunleavy is right about Schwarz, Bruder, and Wiese is debatable. "Dunleavy tends to ignore any damning evidence against these guys," another reporter who covered the ex-cops' trial said. "He's decided to see this case as a witch-hunt against cops, when it's much more nuanced than that."

The New York *Post* was founded in 1801 by Alexander Hamilton, and rightfully proclaims itself the country's oldest continuously published daily newspaper. During its long history, the *Post* has boasted such writers as Walt Whitman, Washington Irving, Orson Welles, Jimmy Cannon, and Murray Kempton. In December, 1976, Murdoch bought the *Post* from Dorothy Schiff, an eccentric banking heiress who had owned it for decades. He remained as proprietor until 1988, when he was forced by Congress to sell the paper because he had acquired a New York television station, WNYW-Channel 5. In 1993, Murdoch was allowed to repurchase the *Post* after it entered bankruptcy.

Schiff's *Post* was an afternoon paper with liberal politics and a circulation of about four hundred and ninety thousand. Although in format it was a tabloid, its layout was restrained and its coverage sober, with long articles about education, foreign affairs, and other serious subjects. Murdoch changed all that. He was determined to produce a conservative, mass-market paper that could cut across ethnic and geographic lines—something he had done to great effect in London with the *Sun*. The target was the *Daily News*, with its circulation of almost two million. "It was totally tribal," Murdoch told me. "The blue-collar workers, the Irish and Italians, they all took the *Daily News*. The middle classes, the Jewish in particular, the schoolteach-

ers, the *Post* was their paper. When we went door-to-door with the *Post*, the *News* readers would say, 'We don't want that Commie rag here.' But our old readers stuck with us, and we managed to grow the circulation gradually." With Murdoch in command, the *Post* added a morning edition, right-wing editorials, and some Fleet Street sizzle. Stories were cut, headlines and pictures enlarged. There was less weighty analysis, to say the least, and more crime, more celebrities, more sports. This type of journalism was hardly unheard of in New York—Pulitzer and Hearst had pioneered it almost a century before—but it hadn't been seen much since the demise of the *Daily Mirror*, in 1963, and some people were outraged. *Time* showed Murdoch as King Kong atop the World Trade Center.

The *Post*'s focus on crime led to accusations of race-baiting, but it was timely, and in Dunleavy Murdoch had a sterling crime reporter. Dunleavy arrived at South Street just as Son of Sam was terrorizing the city with a .44-calibre revolver. Breslin, who was then at the *News*, seemed to own the story—the serial killer had even written to him—but Dunleavy produced dozens of "exclusives," some of them merely whipping things up, others breaking real news, such as when he posed as a bereavement counsellor and obtained an interview with the family of one of the victims. One of the questionable stories was a dramatic front-page appeal to Son of Sam to give himself up—to the *Post*, not to the police. Coverage of that nature was labelled "irresponsible" by an article in this magazine, to which Dunleavy replied at the time, "Look, all I have to say about *The New Yorker* is that, when we had the big blackout, *The New Yorker* covered it by writing about Diana Vreeland having to dine by candlelight."

On August 11, 1977, the day after David Berkowitz was finally arrested, the *Post* sold more than eight hundred thousand copies. Dunleavy marked the occasion in typical grisly style by interviewing John Diel, the boyfriend of one of Berkowitz's victims.

John Diel exploded in anger when he heard that police had arrested a man they believe to be Son of Sam.

"I wanna feel the guy's blood, I wanna put my hands around his throat and I want

him to know he would be dying by my hands . . . I want to eat . . . yeah, eat the guy with my mouth."

In 1978, Dunleavy was put in charge of the newsroom. "He was fulfilling his mission from Rupert Murdoch, which was to reestablish the *Post* as a right-wing paper," Alexander Cockburn, who was then the *Village Voice*'s media critic, opined to me recently. "Dunleavy was like Rupert's dog. Rupert would set him on people, and off he would go." Cockburn took great pleasure in lambasting the Huns marauding on South Street, though he now concedes that it was "like a dog pissing up against a lamppost" for all the notice Dunleavy took.

Dunleavy freely admits that he had a mission to change things. He thinks things needed changing. "When I took over the desk, there was a virus in the newsroom called the Columbia School of Journalism," he said. "Everyone, with the exception of a few old guys—such as George Carpozi and Cy Egan—was liberal. They all wanted to work for the New York *Times* or the Washington *Post*." Some of the disenchanted moved on, others were ignored, as Dunleavy educated the young reporters in the tabloid art of shocking and amazing the readers on every page. "We used to joke that he had just twelve types of story—a heroic this, a brave that, a lucky guy, a tragic kid, and so on," Dick Belsky, who was the *Post*'s city editor from 1980 to 1988, told me. Dunleavy started work at eleven in the morning and didn't leave until after midnight. Most nights, Murdoch would call for an update on the following day's paper. When he had delivered it, Dunleavy would often go to a local bar till dawn, then return to the office and grab a few hours sleep on a couch before starting work again.

The refashioned *Post* didn't please the purists—"a force for evil," a writer in the *Columbia Journalism Review* fulminated—but it reflected the views of many in a city where the white middle classes were fleeing to the suburbs and the tax base was crumbling. At a time when most newspapers were shedding readers, the *Post*'s circulation almost doubled. Without much of a promotional budget, the paper's main marketing device was its front-page banner headline, known inside the paper as the "wood." (It was called that because of the big oak letters

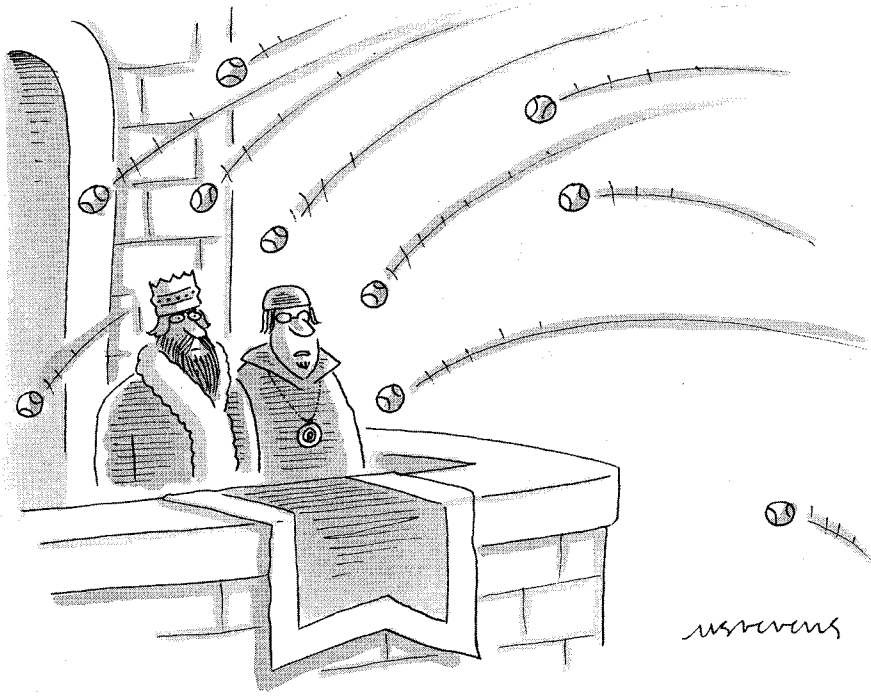


RICHARD MERKIN

As we flew overhead, whole families sitting in the yards of destroyed houses tilted their heads up and froze in position to watch us out of sight. It was nearly six o'clock now, and many families were crouching around fires, cooking their dinners. Pots, bedding, and a few pieces of furniture lay out in the yards. In some places, the spindly frames of tiny huts had appeared. Everywhere there were mounds of hay about three feet high, and I later found out that these were small, wall-less individual sleeping shelters consisting of straw thatching mounted on sticks. Some people had built their straw shelters out in the center of the fields, away from trees and bunkers—perhaps because they knew that our Army, believing all bunkers and caves to have been constructed by the Vietcong as fortifications, treated them as prime military targets. Firewood, most of it beams from the destroyed houses, lay about in piles. Children played in the dust, and generally there were far more children, women, and old people in sight than men. Small boys were riding in from the fields on the backs of water buffalo. The pilot noticed artillery shells sending up puffs of whitish smoke in several spots near one edge of these fields, and took care to skirt the area by about a kilometre. The people below continued to work outside their shelters and did not show any sign of noticing the artillery shells that were exploding nearby. The pilot flew the bubble out over the rice fields, and we raced across them at a height of fifteen feet. He pointed out a few scraps of twisted metal and machinery lying in a scorched circle in one of the fields and said that his helicopter had been shot down there a month before. He and his gunner had landed without injury. Once they were on the ground, guerrillas had shot at them from a tree line, and they had fired back. Fifteen

minutes later, they had been rescued by another helicopter. A minute or so after he'd pointed out the spot where he crashed, he performed one of the bubble's many aerial stunts. He raced toward the tree line and then, when it seemed that we would crash into the trees, suddenly brought the helicopter sharply upward and arrested its forward motion, so that it rolled up over the trees and house ruins and came to a stop in the air as though it had been caught head on by a blast of wind. As we floated slowly just above the half-destroyed trees, the pilot exclaimed, "Look! There's one!" In a rising tone of tense excitement, he continued, "See? See? He's hiding!" I looked down and saw a youth crouching on a path next to a line of trees. The pilot wheeled the bubble and headed it back toward the youth, who then stood up and began to chop at a log with an axe. "See? Now he's pretending to be working!" the pilot said. An instant later, he cried out, "Look! There's another. She's hiding! See how she's hiding?" I looked down and saw that as our bubble drifted in a slow arc a woman in black edged carefully around a thin tree, always keeping on the opposite side of the trunk from the bubble.

—Jonathan Schell
A Reporter at Large, March 9, 1968



"The people want more tennis, Your Majesty."

used to typeset it.) New readers were attracted by words such as "BOY GULPS GAS, EXPLODES," "GRANNY EXECUTED IN HER PINK PAJAMAS," and, classically, "HEADLESS BODY IN TOPLESS BAR." Dunleavy didn't write that headline—its author was Vinnie Musetto, who now writes the *Post's* Cine File column—but he contributed in other ways that aren't taught at Columbia. One evening, a captured villain was due to be "walked" outside a police precinct so that press photographers could get a shot of him. It was too late for the *Post's* first edition, and Dunleavy was worried that the *News*, which had a later press time, would get the picture alone. To prevent this from happening, he called the police precinct, disguised his voice, and threatened to kill the suspect if he came outside. The photo call was cancelled and the *News* didn't get the picture. "The days and nights we put in, it was horrendous," Dunleavy recalled wistfully. "But I can never remember having so much fun."

The *Post* today is very different from the paper that Dunleavy worked on in the nineteen-seventies and eighties, and not just because it's now exclusively a morning paper. Like New York, the *Post* has been gentrified. The blaring

headlines and bitchy gossip columns remain, but where once there were gory crime stories, there are now long articles about expensive handbags and media mergers. Instead of targeting the *News*, the *Post* increasingly sees itself as an alternative, or second read, for affluent *Times* readers who tire of the paper's earnest tone, liberal politics, and sheer bulk. The *Post's* weekday circulation is about four hundred and forty thousand, more than it was a few years back, but well below the figure reached in the late seventies and early eighties. (One thing hasn't changed: the *Post* still loses bags of money—upward of twenty million dollars a year, according to some estimates.)

Dunleavy could easily be seen as an anachronism in the yuppified *Post*. Somehow, he manages not to be, partly because he is so enterprising, partly because the city he writes about is not quite so white collar or so deracinated as its cheerleaders like to think. Dunleavy is supposed to contribute three columns a week, but he often ends up writing four or five. By seven-thirty or eight, he is leaving messages for Maralyn Matlick, the editor who manages the *Post's* city desk five mornings a week. One day a while back, I met Matlick at a coffee shop in the *Post's* building. It was a cou-

ple of days after a crime in which old New York had reared its fearsome head. At a Wendy's in Queens, seven employees had been bound in the basement, gagged, and shot in the head. The suspected shooter, John Taylor, was a former Wendy's employee who had skipped bail on a previous armed-robbery charge. "Today's supposed to be Steve's day off, but he's been calling me every fifteen minutes," Matlick told me. "He's got the court papers on the suspect's history. I don't know how he did it, but he gave me the names of every judge who ever touched the case, the prosecutor, and he's working on the defense lawyer. As of when I left, he was going to write about how the court system screws up in cases like this." Matlick paused. "He will work a story more enthusiastically than any cub reporter. I've never once heard him say, 'Why am I still doing this sort of stuff?' I've heard it many times from reporters half his age. If I call him at six-thirty in the morning and say, 'Steve, there's a big story in Brooklyn,' he just says, 'I'll be right there.' And he never asks the way."

The next morning, Dunleavy's picture byline, which is more than a decade out of date, appeared above a column detailing why Taylor "should have been behind bars." A few days later, Dunleavy quoted Rick Lazio, the Republican candidate for the United States Senate, calling for the death penalty in the Wendy's case. The occasion gave Dunleavy an opportunity to remind *Post* readers of his own considered opinions on capital punishment:

The Queens district attorney, Richard Brown, should right now be shopping for twin beds.

Well not really beds—gurneys on which you strap humanity's filth and jab them with the needle of ultimate night.

If there isn't a big news story running, Dunleavy may file one of his political columns. Typically, he will assault, in pretty much hysterical terms, one or more of the following: Bill Clinton, Hillary Clinton, Al Gore, Janet Reno, Ted Kennedy, Al Sharpton, David Dinkins, Jesse Jackson, Ralph Nader, Ron Kuby, Tom Hayden, Jane Fonda, Rosie O'Donnell, Spike Lee, Barbra Streisand, Alec Baldwin. (In a recent column filed from Los Angeles during the Demo-

cratic Convention, he described Hayden as a "bonehead," a "wacko lefty," and an "aging toothless tiger of a tired hippie era.") Some of Dunleavy's colleagues suspect him of carrying on the hallowed Fleet Street tradition of writing what the proprietor wants to read. "If Rupert Murdoch was a Communist, Steve would be a bomb-throwing Marxist," one *Post* veteran assured me. Dunleavy, for his part, says he has been a conservative for as long as he can remember. Certainly, he has been churning out right-wing screeds for a long time. When he wrote for the *Star*, his weekly column, "This I Believe," was so right-wing that a John Birch Society gave him its American of the Year award despite the fact that he wasn't a citizen. Age hasn't moderated him. Earlier this year, he was at a party thrown by *Esquire* when Mark Green, the Democratic public advocate, walked in and greeted him. "Mark, mate, I love you," Dunleavy said. "I love the way you talk. I love the way you smile. But, as far as your politics go, I'm going to fuck you every way I can."

In 1986, Murdoch plucked Dunleavy from South Street and sent him to his fledgling television network, Fox, where he was setting up "A Current Affair," a nightly news magazine staffed largely with Australian and British tabloid reporters. After a decade on the *Post* news desk, Dunleavy found himself on national television, with a suitcase full of Murdoch's money to pay interviewees. He made the most of it. When Jessica Hahn, mistress of the televangelist Jim Bakker, promised "Nightline" an exclusive interview, Dunleavy rushed to her house, told a driver from ABC that she had been taken to the hospital, and later grabbed the interview for himself. After William Kennedy Smith was arrested on a rape charge in Palm Beach, Dunleavy flew down and filmed so many reports that the *Times* published a piece saying that the Smith trial was as much Dunleavy's story as the Scopes trial was H. L. Mencken's. And when Amy Fisher shot Mary Jo Buttafuoco in the head, Dunleavy helped turn the sordid Long Island love triangle into a long-running soap opera that, at times, appeared to run exclusively on Fox.

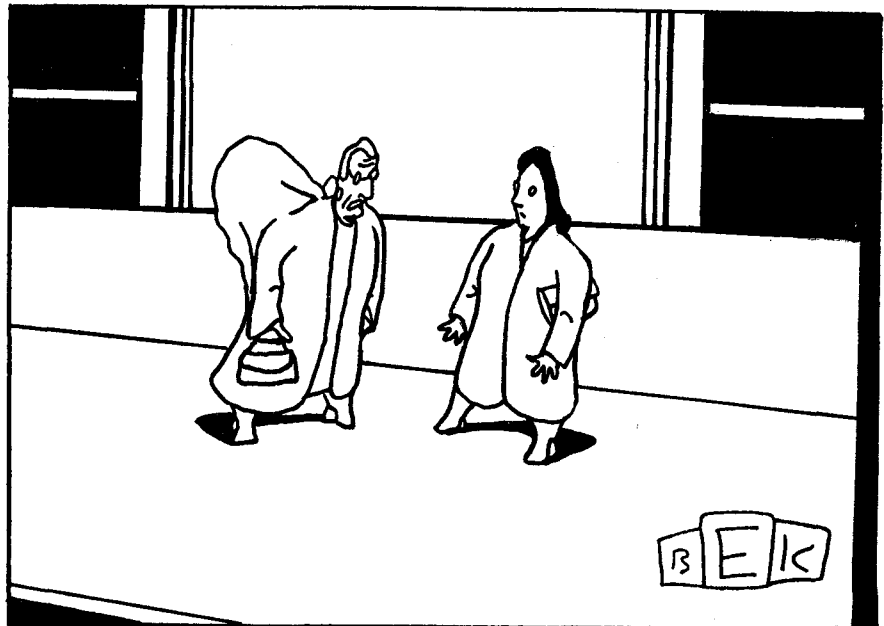
Since it was cheaply produced, "A Current Affair" made a lot of money.

The show's success attracted imitators, such as "Inside Edition" and "Extra," which made its once outrageous content seem routine and, eventually, stale. Management of the show was gradually shifted from New York to Los Angeles, and in May, 1995, a new team of executive producers was hired. On June 1, 1995, Dunleavy was summoned to a breakfast meeting and told he was out; a few months later "A Current Affair" was cancelled. Dunleavy has no doubt who was to blame for its demise. "The moment that the suits in L.A. wanted to take over 'A Current Affair,' that was the death knell," he told me. Two Fox executives in particular provoked Dunleavy's ire: Lucy Salhany ("a very brilliant salesperson who suddenly thought she was a journalist") and Barry Diller ("a brilliant guy, but he was no more a journalist than a frogman is an astronaut").

Conspicuously missing in the list of people Dunleavy blamed for what happened to "A Current Affair" was the man ultimately responsible for its cancellation. "Rupert Murdoch cannot cross the 't's and dot the 'i's on everything in the world, and he does have respect for his executives," Dunleavy insisted to me. When he returned to the *Post* after being fired from "A Current Affair," however, he was deeply hurt. Colleagues recall him sitting in the smoking room and muttering darkly about all the money he had made for Murdoch over the years.

When I asked Murdoch about what happened at "A Current Affair," he surprised me by expressing sympathy for Dunleavy's view. "The Hollywood toffs all got ashamed of it, and moved in and took control of it, put in other people and really destroyed the character of it," he said. "I should have stepped in."

Some of Dunleavy's friends believe that after he left "A Current Affair" his drinking got still heavier. Even at the *Post*, where Dunleavy's boozing is cherished as a symbol of the paper's outlaw reputation, his behavior after he returned started to raise eyebrows. There was the morning when Gladys Suarez, an editorial assistant, was walking around the near-empty newsroom distributing newspapers. As she came across Dunleavy's cubicle, Suarez eyed Dunleavy's cadaverous form slumped across his desk, face down. Under the desk, another man was prostrate. Thinking the worst, Suarez ran back into the newsroom and shrieked, "There's two men dead! Call 911!" A few minutes later, several members of the Fire Department emerged from the elevator. One of them seized Dunleavy, who is all skin and bones, and shook him vigorously. Dunleavy eventually opened his eyes, emitted a breath reeking of stale alcohol, and asked sheepishly, "Where's the fire, mate?" (The body under the desk belonged to another Australian journalist, Mark Morri, who was visiting the



"I'm sure it's nothing."

Post on an exchange program. The previous evening, Morri had enrolled in Dunleavy's orientation course for antipodean reporters seeking fame and fortune in New York.)

That incident might have been forgotten if Dunleavy had not attracted unwanted attention from the authorities again, earlier this year. In late January, he was arrested for being drunk and disorderly at the Des Moines airport, where he was attempting to catch a United Airlines flight to Manchester, New Hampshire, to cover the Presidential primary. One afternoon at Langan's, I asked Dunleavy about his mishap in Iowa. He said he had been drinking to celebrate his sixty-second birthday and had become agitated with the airline ground staff, because on the outward leg of his trip his flight had been diverted to Cincinnati. "All I said was 'You better get me to Manchester. You fucked me last time around, you better not fuck me again,'" he explained. "They said, 'You're drunk.' Three guys came out. They were surrounding me. Some idiot kept on sticking his belly out and pushing me around. I gave him a little whack with my elbow, nothing too painful." According to some accounts, the person Dunleavy manhandled was the pilot. Dunleavy denies it. What is certain is that the police were called. When they arrived, they asked Dunleavy to blow into a bag. He told them he was "too drunk to take a Breathalyzer," but eventually acquiesced. The cops took him to a station house and placed him in a cell with some other drunks, one of whom recognized him from "A Current Affair." After sleeping it off, Dunleavy posted three hundred and twenty-five dollars' bail and went on his way, thinking little of it until he reached the East Coast and saw the story of his arrest in a faxed copy of the *Des Moines Register*.

The story was picked up by the *News*, and eventually it reached the ears of Murdoch, who was not at all pleased. "Mate, if you and I did that forty years ago, nobody would have turned a hair," Dunleavy said forlornly. "If every time you and I got drunk and into a fight it had ended up in the papers, they'd have been cutting down forests in Finland to cover it. But times have changed, I recognize that. That's why I don't drink anymore on the road. I'm terrified, terri-

fied." Shortly after telling me this story, Dunleavy ordered another vodka-and- tonic to calm his nerves.

The sentencing of Charles Schwarz, Thomas Bruder, and Thomas Wiese took place at the federal district court in Brooklyn late in June. Dunleavy got up even earlier than usual and took the six-o'clock train into Penn Station. For once, he was less than immaculately turned out. A greenfly bite had prevented him from shaving, and he looked unkempt. The hearing was scheduled for ten o'clock, and Dunleavy was worried that he might not get in if he didn't arrive early. When he reached the courthouse, it was seven-forty-five, and there was only one person waiting. For the next two hours, Dunleavy greeted people connected with the defendants. Guy Molinari, the Staten Island borough president, shook his hand. Andra Schwarz stopped to give him a quick kiss, as did Charles Schwarz's mother. "Hello, darling," she said. "This is a tough day for me."

"I know it is, love," Dunleavy replied.

At about nine-thirty, reporters were allowed up to Judge Eugene Nickerson's courtroom, on the sixth floor. Abner Louima's family were sitting on a bench outside the court, but Dunleavy made no attempt to speak to them. (As far as I could tell, he didn't even recognize Louima's mother.) Eventually, Louima himself arrived, with Al Sharpton and a few others.

Schwarz was sentenced first. Before he was put away, he made an impassioned statement that sounded eerily like one of Dunleavy's columns. "This case was about many things, but it was never about justice," Schwarz declared. Judge Nickerson, who is eighty-one, was unmoved. Speaking in a low voice, he said a jury had found that "Schwarz put his foot on Louima's mouth to silence him when he cried out after Volpe kicked

him in the groin, and then lifted him by the handcuffs while Volpe sodomized him." For this crime, Schwarz, though less culpable than Volpe, deserved fifteen and two-thirds years in prison. Bruder and Wiese were up next. They, too, proclaimed their innocence and stressed the services they had performed as cops. Judge Nickerson acknowledged their exemplary prior records, but said that in view of their convictions he had little choice but to give them each five years in prison, the maximum allowed. The sentences were not unexpected, but Dunleavy was outraged at Judge Nickerson. "Jesus Christ, that guy's senile," he said to me outside the courtroom after the sentencing. "I couldn't even hear him. He's senile." We walked down the corridor and ran into Al Sharpton, who was equally outraged, in his case about Schwarz's defiant statement and the fact that he had received only fifteen years in jail, instead of the maximum possible term of life.

"What do you think he should have got, Al?" Dunleavy asked.

"He should have got the max," Sharpton replied. "Volpe couldn't have done it by himself."

Dunleavy and Sharpton have been enacting scenes like this for a decade or more, going all the way back to the Tawana Brawley trial. They both know their roles, and they both enjoy playing them. Dunleavy is the defender of the white working class, the sons and daughters of *Daily News* readers, whose families moved from Brooklyn and Queens to unfashionable towns in Westchester and Long Island. Sharpton is the defender of the inner-city blacks whom the whites fled from, the immigrants, the sharecroppers' great-grandchildren. Neither group has much of a say in today's New York, but they are still out there by the million. Dunleavy and Sharpton, for all their faults, go to places like Bushwick, Morrisania, Islip, and Massapequa, listen to the people who live there, and give them a voice.

Before going downstairs to register his outrage for the television cameras, Sharpton squared up in front of Dunleavy and did a bit of shadowboxing. When they had quit clowning, Sharpton said he would offer Dunleavy a razor to shave himself but he was afraid that Dunleavy might cut his throat. "I'd only



use a razor to cut your throat, Al," Dunleavy replied cheerfully. After Sharpton had gone, Dunleavy smiled. "In a funny way, we get on quite well," he said. "We're like the best of enemies."

Despite the tough punishment handed out to Bruder and Wiese, Dunleavy's efforts on their behalf were not wholly in vain. A few days before they were due to start serving their sentences, the U.S. Attorney's office decided not to oppose bail pending appeal, which means the two cops won't go to prison for at least a year. Dunleavy was delighted. A few Sundays back, I drove out to Lido Beach to see him. The town, small and narrow, sits along the Atlantic between Long Beach and Point Lookout. Dunleavy's home turned out to be a handsome Mediterranean-style house on a third of an acre, with a red tile roof, a leafy garden, and a shaded pool. The ocean was just a block away. "At least, I've got something to show for sixty-two years," Dunleavy said as he led me down to his basement study, where he was trying to file his column for Monday. "We don't even lock the door. The people who live across the street are called Bonanno, and Tommy Gambino lives just down the block."

Dunleavy's desktop computer, which he installed last year, was acting up, so he shouted to his wife, Gloria, and asked her to awaken their twenty-eight-year-old son, Sean, a freelance cameraman, who was sleeping off a hangover. Sean came down, bleary-eyed, and fixed whatever was wrong. "Thanks, mate," Dunleavy said as Sean went back to bed. After Dunleavy had sent in his column, this one protesting the potential release of a New Jersey cop killer who had served just thirty-six years in jail, he grabbed a couple of Budweisers from the fridge, and we moved outside to sit by the pool. Gloria, a self-assured fifty-three-year-old blonde, joined us. She married Dunleavy in March, 1971, after having met him a few months earlier in Costello's. I asked her what Dunleavy was like back then. "Younger," she replied, with a sharp smile. "No different. Just younger."

Dunleavy picked up a cordless phone and called the *Post* city desk to check on his column. "Is Joe there?" he asked. "Myron, don't be a fuck. Joe Cunningham." While Dunleavy was talking to his editors, I asked Gloria, a retired real-estate agent,



"*Más agua for the gringos?*"

what it has been like to live for so long with a husband whose nicknames include Street Dog and the Rogue. "Exhausting," she replied. In the past, Dunleavy was often away on assignment, sometimes for months. "I think it's good to be apart, in retrospect," she said. "It's not the same thing, day in, day out." After Dunleavy had finished checking his column, which he had read back to him line by line, I asked him to name the best story he had ever worked on. He refused, saying he tries to bring the same level of enthusiasm to every story. When I pushed him further, he mentioned Chappaquiddick, Son of Sam, and John Zaccaro, Geraldine Ferraro's husband, whose alleged business ties to the Mafia were revealed by the *Post*. But Dunleavy was much keener to talk about his latest project: a biography of Generoso Pope, the controversial figure who founded the *National Enquirer* and helped create the modern era of tabloid journalism in America. In his basement, Dunleavy has boxes containing dozens of interviews with Pope

and his associates. "I haven't been through it all yet, but there's lots of gangsters, sex, and newspapers," Dunleavy said.

If the book works out, it might provide a new career for Dunleavy. After playing the roles of tabloid newspaperman, tabloid television host, and tabloid controversialist, he could now adopt the role of tabloid historian. Somehow, though, it is hard to see him giving up daily journalism. As I drove back to the city, I was reminded of something Jimmy Breslin had said to me in our first conversation, when he was still being nice about Dunleavy. "You've gotta like the news business. You've gotta love it. I mean, I went to the Wendy's shooting. I couldn't not go there. There's something about working in that way, you never get sick. I had a flu in 1968, and I haven't had a thing since. The daily surprises of the news business keep you going, keep you well. It's the only thing keeping Dunleavy going. If he ever stopped, the alcohol would drown him, he'd clutch at his throat, and he'd be gone." ♦

A SELECTIVE ADVANTAGE

How to think like a fish, from the Connecticut River to the Danube.

BY JOHN MCPHEE

The Connecticut River is rich in shad but not in places to cast for them. The fall line is above Hartford, at Enfield, where a rock ledge and the rubbled remains of a dam give pause to the annual spawning run, attracting boats in large numbers, and a density of wading fishermen to the right bank of the river. Buck shad, roe shad—the fish slide by in thousands, and then go on to find sixteen easy miles before the thousands catch up with earlier thousands, which in turn have caught up with earlier thousands in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Holyoke Dam is thirty feet high and was built in 1849. The bucks stop there. And then the roes. Thomas Chalmers may have been slow to figure this out, but in 1871, secretively, he addressed himself to the river below the dam with a fly rod and a dry fly. In the twenty-first century, fishing for shad with a dry fly is regarded as an eccentric and essentially pointless stunt. On his millers, moths—dry flies—Thomas Chalmers caught upward of a hundred shad. His story “leaked out”—according to *The Turf, Field & Farm* (March 13, 1874)—but in losing his private paradise Chalmers became a progenitor of American shad fishing.

Beside Holyoke Dam today are two large elevator cars that much resemble their counterparts in office buildings. The analogy extends, as shad are lured in there by a concentrated current and lifted five stories in such numbers that the cars contain more fish than water. During the spring migration, several hundred thousand shad go up in the elevators and swim on out to the north, first passing glass walls and the flattened noses of Massachusetts schoolchildren, who come there by the busful. All that notwithstanding, the water below Holyoke Dam is still what Thomas Chalmers figured it would be: the hottest spot in New England to fish for American shad.

A thousand feet wide, the dam connects Holyoke, on the right bank, to South Hadley, on the left. Urban Holyoke is a fossil American Venice, with mile-long canals running like streets through the city, delivering power to industries that flourished in the century before the century before. In ten places, water shoots down penstocks from the high canals, turns turbines to make electricity, and plunges into the Connecticut River. Confused shad mill around these plunge pools, and fishermen do, too. South Hadley, Massachusetts, across the water, is wooded. Trails come down to the river from suburban streets. A narrow unpaved lane drops through the trees to a clearing made for launching boats. During the spring migration, many schools of shad choose the South Hadley side when the Connecticut is running high over the dam—when “the river is just honkin’.”

The speaker is Boyd Kynard—plaid shirt, dark-blue watch cap, the numbers on his Massachusetts fishing license so large that a fish-and-game warden could check on him and not get out of a car. Kynard is sinewy, square-jawed, dark-haired, compact. His eyes are bright, and quick to notice things. He appears to have been indoors on scattered occasions in the past. He has come to the river in South Hadley so early in the morning he’s the first on the scene—earlier even than Armand Charest. Kynard lives in Amherst, twelve miles away, and works in Turners Falls, thirty-three miles upriver. He remarks that he is not only the first fisherman on the scene on this May, high-season day but the first person to show up here, every year, at the start of the spring migration—earlier even than Armand Charest.

A van of some age rumbles down to the river, swings around, backs, and parks among the sycamores, ironwoods, and locusts. The driver does not step out but instead disappears into the back

of the van and begins a series of activities visible only in the rocking of the chassis. Something like origami is going on in there, as hooks and hinges link unfolding parts and the van turns into a store. A sunroof pops up, as vent. Paired doors in one side fold back against the body, each bright with shad darts, striper jigs, willow-leaf blades, and other lures. A sales counter spans the opening—Armand Charest at the counter, ready for business. All around him are shelves of shad darts—varied, variegated, in great numbers and in every size and sparkling color. Charest is alert, incisive, weightless, and wiry. Even his glasses have wire rims. You will never see better shad darts than the ones he has in that van. They’re all of his own making. “Willow-leaf blades” is Connecticut River dialect for flutter spoons.

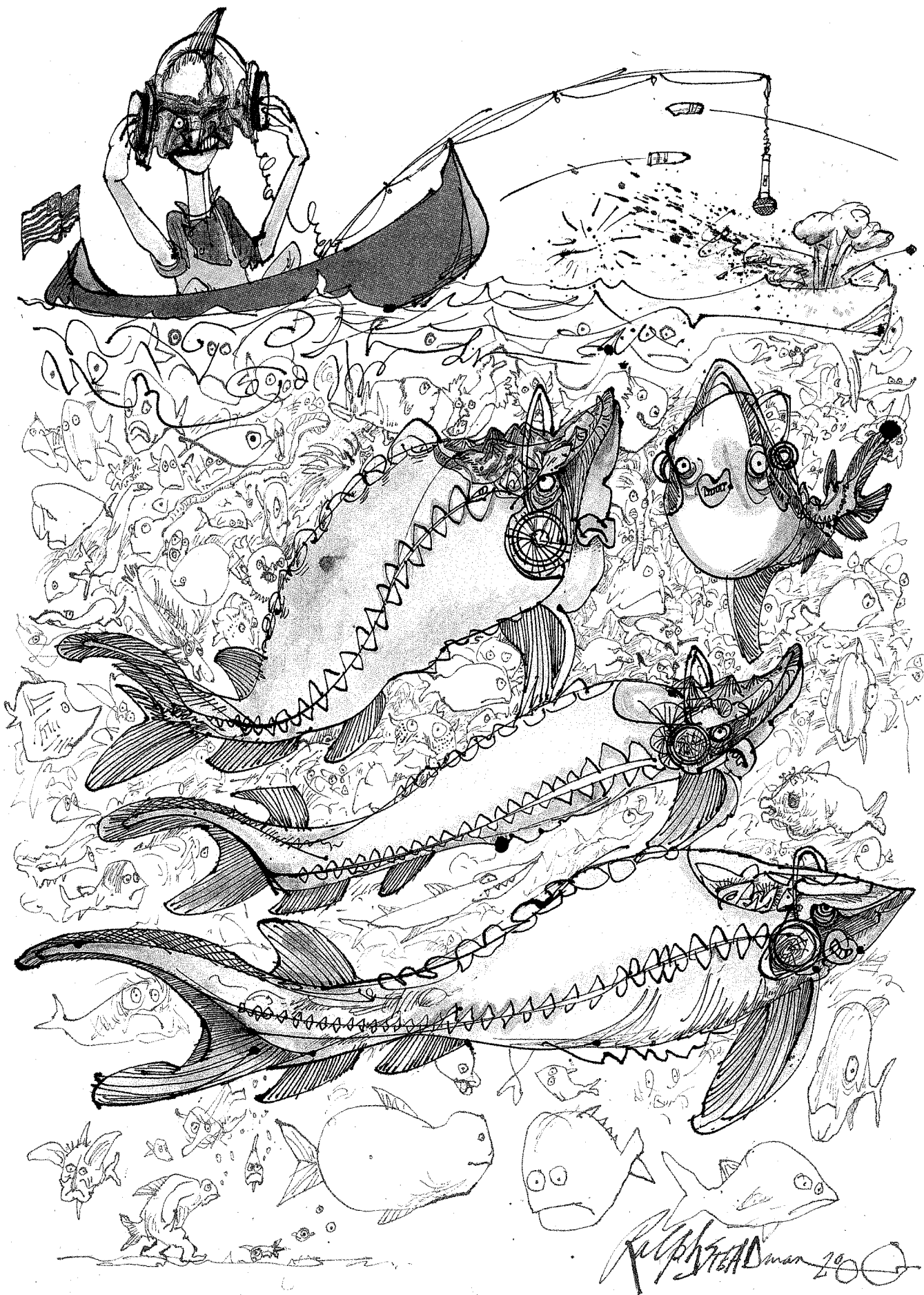
Of shad caught by sportfishermen in the Connecticut River, eighty per cent are caught in Massachusetts, and at least eighty per cent of the shad caught in Massachusetts are from Thomas Chalmers’ paradise, here in the purview of Armand Charest. Opportunely, Charest’s trade has expanded into striper jigs, because striped bass have lately become populous in the river. Personally, I have to admit that I would be less inclined to fish for stripers with jigs than with trinitrotoluene. I look upon stripers as I look upon the worst ilk of editor. Stripers eat the young of shad.

Kynard asks Charest if he notices much difference between shad fishermen and striper fishermen.

Charest says, “Shad fishermen are polite.”

Charest looks out on the river, and up toward the widespread dam, where the water is falling in discrete curtains like an immense roaring bar code. Then he amplifies his comment, saying, “Shad fishermen are polite. They’re educated. They include a lot of women. Stripper fishermen are rude. They’re

RALPH STEADMAN



"The clock is ticking. They have varying degrees of energy," Boyd Kynard told me. "Just like people. Some fight harder than others."

obnoxious. They're meat fishermen. No women."

Kynard says, "They're basically your wrestling crowd."

Charest says, "They have missing teeth."

Kynard says, "They're kick-ass fishermen."

I purchase half a dozen very small roundhead darts by Armand Charest. He looks me over with approval. The colors I choose are miscellaneous. Kynard wants to know what colors have been working well in recent days in the river. Charest mentions red-and-yellow. I give it as my opinion that the fish are hitting or they aren't—color doesn't matter.

Through Charest's wire-rims comes the look that Carl Gustav Jung would have had if Jung had sold shad darts. Armand Charest says, "It matters to the fisherman."

Nearer the dam, Kynard and I pull on

chest waders and enter the river. We're up to our waists, casting. After an hour, I've caught two little blueback herring, but I can't get near a shad. It must be the color. I change darts, from chartreuse to red-and-white—to no effect—and watch cormorants riding the current. I catch, and grudgingly release, a beautiful young striper scarcely a foot in length, but I still can't get near a shad, while Kynard's darts, on four-pound test, are flying. They seem to go halfway to Holyoke, and he's hooking into roe shad. Whatever else he is, the man is all fisherman, and, if it can be said of certain people—in Norman Maclean's phrase—that they are able to "think like a fish," the description is tailored to Boyd Kynard.

He's had a roe on the line for twenty minutes. She bulldogs in the current, jumps, bulldogs again. My admiration of his skill is somewhat diminished by green corrosive envy. He looks around laconically while the fish races cross-river. He

says, "The settlers called them white salmon, because of the way they leap."

I ask, "What color you using?"

He answers, "Red-and-white."

His fish jumps again but does not interrupt his train of thought. "When it's early in the season and there's a lot of turbidity, I want something really flashy and silvery, or gold, that catches whatever light it can. Later on, as the water clears up, I think what makes the biggest difference is the size. You see guys out here throwing great big darts in clear water—they're not going to do any good." As he handles his rod, his interest seems high but his level of concern low. If the fish breaks off, the fish breaks off. This is not his first prom.

"They're beautiful fish," he remarks, as the present one rolls, flashes, and dives. "Especially the first wave to come up. With their big silvery scales, they're lovely animals."

It was to Boyd Kynard that I sent scales from a roe shad I once took two hours and thirty-five minutes to land—a four-and-three-quarter-pound, three-year-old roe shad—and, from time to time, to Boyd Kynard that I have shown other scales from shad that behaved unusually or seemed anomalously small. Shad scales, like overlapping shingles, are only about twenty-five per cent exposed. The exposed part is opaque silver. The hidden, anterior part is translucent and bears the tree-ring-like annuli that—in the late nineteen-nineties—began to yield enhanced information through new techniques in the chemical analysis of microelements. For example, different rivers contain differing quantities of selenium. The selenium in an annulus of a shad scale can be used to identify the home river of the shad. "Even areas within the same river," Kynard has told me. "They're doing this with Atlantic salmon now. They can actually tell you where in the river—or in which tributary—a particular scale was grown. The scale is a growing tissue that is affected by the environment around it; so when we take it, we have a book. It has a freshwater and a saltwater part. You can follow a shad to the Bay of Fundy. You can relate the chemistry of the scale to the environment that the animal did its growing in—the actual spatial location. Biologists in Canada tag fish and get



letters from Connecticut, New Jersey, and so forth. The shad is carrying the same story on its back." In close approximation, the scale records date of birth and date of ocean entry. Successive annuli record successive years at sea. Then comes a spawning mark on the first annulus that records a return to the river.

After fishing until noon that day in South Hadley, we went up the wooded slope and into a small restaurant of the type that stakes its reputation on unique meat loaf. Like all other shad fishermen, we discussed—as we had before and would again—the behavior of American shad. With this difference: Kynard is a behaviorist at the S. O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center, in Turners Falls, the only laboratory of its kind in the world. He is the author of numerous scientific papers on—among other things—sturgeon and shad. His early-season, cold-weather visits to Holyoke Dam largely have to do with the fish elevator and what may be coming into it, but he always has his rod in the car.

"They're fish with emotional problems," he said. "You can lift them out of the water a matter of seconds and they just die, the stress is so great. I've never handled another species like that. It may be that their potassium level goes down. In any case, some sort of chemical imbalance occurs and it's irreversible. They literally die of fright."

Since they've been in the ocean three, four, five years, and were only about four inches long when they left freshwater after their first summer, I could not imagine what goes on in their heads when they come back and take on the rush of a river—its sudden variations, its limited range of depths, its floods, its blocking structures. "What do they think when they come upon a riffle or a rapid?"

"They never keep going. They look it over. They're going to bunch up any time anything confronts them. Rapids. A bridge pier. Otherwise, they're strung out in a line. They're afraid of variation. They're afraid of the unknown. They get used to a particular environment, and if it changes they have problems. They've had this nice river with uniform laminar flow; it's deep, the light is the same. They're down near the bottom. That's where they swim—in the bottom third. I've done some studies on that. They're down where they have just a little bit of

light but everything is very predictable. They go right up the channel. Now they get to a shallow water area with riffles, white water. Everything is changing. And they have problems. Different fish respond differently to variation. Salmon move very cautiously. When they get to something like that, they will delay, too, but they figure it out a lot quicker. Shad—they're like the extreme for having an adverse reaction, for stopping when presented with change. They swim around in circles. Even a half-submerged log will create a riffle in the water, and, when shad come up to it, it stops them. They just circle around, thinking, Oh my goodness, I'm in such big trouble. I'm so confused. I'm so confused. They're a schooling species and very flighty. They don't like to do things on their own. From the moment those guys are hatched until the day they die, they are always in a school."

Their schooling is more than mass hysteria. It has hydrodynamic advantages. Like geese in their V formation, like bikers in a pack, the schools get along on less energy than their individual members would expend if they were swimming on their own. Vortices that come off bird, fish, and biker help draw followers along in the way that eddies behind rocks in rapids will pull a canoe or a fish upstream. "Their individual oxygen consumption is lower when they're in schools," Kynard said. "If a school becomes small, the amount of oxygen they use per individual is going to go up. But I think it's mostly psychological. They're really reactive as a school."

A railroad runs along the Delaware in the seventy-five miles where the river is the border between New York and Pennsylvania. I told him I had never felt a shad hit a dart while a train was going by. I have waited out the tremor of as many as five engines pulling upward of a hundred and forty cars—many of them double-decker—while my casts were limp in the river. The shad sense the presence of trains through their lateral lines—pressure-sensitive tubes that run down the two sides from head to tail. Kynard said, "When a train is going by, that lateral line is just jumping—sending messages, Help! Help! Help! Avoid! Run! Run!" When you're standing in the river, shad will swim right into your leg. They're not afraid, because

they think you're a rock or a tree. But a masked friend of mine who swims in the river shooting fish with a speargun—killing rainbows, walleyes, and bass for his table—tells me that he has never been able to approach shad close enough to hit one.

They are sensitive to any type of change, from a passing shadow to a developing storm. When a full moon rises over spawning shad, as soon as the light hits the water they stop spawning. Light—more than anything else except temperature—prompts their behavior. Without it, they are disoriented, but with those big absorptive eyes they don't need much. "When it's dark, these guys will be almost immobile. They'll hold where there's no current, or very slow current. If light intensity gets above a critical threshold—about twenty-five lux, which is like a candle—they can begin to use it for orientation, and they will move into swifter water. They have a zone in which they can function—too little or too much is outside the zone. In the middle of the day, you will find them avoiding bright light and staying over in the shadow."

From the perspective of a shad, nothing shoots forth light quite as much as white water on a bright day—one more reason to stop and think twice about a rapid. "They don't see in the way that we see," Kynard continued. "They make a chemical called rhodopsin that is sensitive to light. The more light, the more rhodopsin is used up." Shad normally, and successfully, avoid bright light. They stay deep enough in the ocean. They stay low in the river. "But when they want to come up rapids they have to come into shallow water, where they have this bright bright bright light—of thirty, forty thousand lux. That's what it is! I think so much light is coming in there that it uses up all the rhodopsin, and now they're essentially blind. And now it's exactly the way it was at night. They cannot stay in fast water. I think that's why they don't go up rapids in the middle of the day."

They move upstream at first light—an optimal time, when muscles are rested. And they move again in the afternoon. Kynard guesses that the falling light reminds them that another day is ending and they've got to get on with their mission. "That drive to get upstream is strong. It must be particularly force-

ful when they sense that they are losing light."

This reminds me of what I do all day (nothing). I sharpen imaginary pencils and look out real windows. The light of a computer screen seems far too bright to me. I kill hours, hoping for distraction, and complain bitterly when distraction occurs. Three, four, five P.M. Nothing whatever accomplished. The day coiling like a spring. Nothing is worse than a lost day. Panic rises, takes over, and I write until I go home at seven, thinking like a shad.

When daylight drops in the evening, the fish turn and retreat from rapids, because they can't maintain orientation. "They go back down, but not far. They find the very first deep slow-water area. That's where they stay. They just kind of settle down to the bottom. Get down to a lower velocity. Get in the current, where they can just maintain position. Let the lateral line take care of keeping them up, and not moving downstream." As if they were treading water, they wait out the night.

"Do they sleep?"

"They rest. That's as close as they come to sleep. Some fish settle to the bottom, and you can come up to them at night. You can hit 'em. They're out of it. Shad are never out of it. Even at night. We've looked at them with infrared. Their eyes are moving."

"Those fish you can go up to and touch—would you say that they are sleeping?"

"Yes. They're out. If you're a predator, they're toast."

"For example."

"Yellow perch. Sticklebacks. All the centrarchids—basses, crappies. Their eyes and brains are not connected with the outside world. There's probably a better word for it, but it's certainly sleep. They're resting on the bottom—two fins and the tail."

If night comes upon a school of shad in a long and quiet reach of the river, they will, sometimes, continue to migrate upstream. "Telemetry studies have found that these guys do move at night, on the bottoms of rivers. In the first place, velocities down there are low. The shad are orienting with their lateral lines. They can do that. They have incredible lateral-line senses. That's how they move upstream at night."

These generalizations about the behavior of American shad are valid only to the point where they give way to individual characteristics, he suggested. "Shad vary. Just like people. Some fight harder than others—wherever they are in the river. I'm a behaviorist. To tease out the variation in behavior, you tag twenty or thirty fish and see what they do." He once tagged "a bunch of shad" below Holyoke Dam, with its controlled tailrace, its elevators—its high-tech methods of manipulating nature. He wanted to see what the bunch would do. Some individuals figured it out quickly and went on upstream. Others took many days. Others hung around for weeks, never figured it out, and went back downriver to spawn.

"We see that in the Delaware," I remarked. "Some fish quit at the first riffle. Others go on and on."

"Oh, you've got to know it," Kynard said. "Some phenotypes are just better at doing that sort of thing than others."

"So they're not particularly clever or smart?"

"I don't know if they're clever. I'm not sure they're smart. They're persistent. With a few exceptions, they're persistent. They never give up."

"What are they living on?" I asked him. "I've looked in hundreds of shad stomachs. I like to slit open the stomach and look inside. Usually, it's clean as a whistle. I've never seen anything of any size in a shad's stomach."

"Neither have I."

"Once in a while, I find something like little bits of grass or algae."

"I've never interpreted that as food."

"How does it get in there?"

"Incidentally."

"Oh."

"When a shad comes into a river, after living on zooplankton in the ocean, it has fixed storage reserves—fat reserves, muscle mass. Those are at a peak for that fish. A shad never eats on the spawning run. In April, there are essentially no zooplankton in the river. A shad

loses up to forty per cent of its somatic body weight. In mass, it's half the fish that entered the river."

Shad that come out of the Gulf of St. Lawrence go upriver past Quebec City and through the Lachine Rapids at Montreal and on to the Ottawa River, a distance of four hundred and fifty miles. Some shad do that—but not all shad that enter the St. Lawrence River. Shad out of the Gulf of Maine—before being occluded by dams a couple of centuries ago—went a hundred and seventy miles up the Penobscot River to Millinocket, where they encountered the natural dam called Grand Falls. Less than two miles below Grand Falls is a broad pool in the river that is still known as Shad Pond. The historic range of shad in the Connecticut—something over two hundred river miles, including a hundred of the border miles of Vermont and New Hampshire—is inconvenienced and ultimately shut down by five dams, of which Holyoke is the first. The free-flowing Delaware is the only main-stem major river in the forty-eight contiguous American states that has never been blocked by a dam. A large proportion of the spring migration seems to prefer to spawn between the Delaware Water Gap and Minisink Island—a piece of river two hundred and ten to two hundred and forty-five miles from the sea buoy. Considerable numbers, though, continue. Those that reach the head of the river, at Hancock, New York, have ascended three hundred and thirty miles, yet many of them keep on going. They go up the Delaware's tributary branches and swim on into a dendritic shrine—the streams of sacred origin of American fly-fishing. They go up the Beaver Kill to the Willowemoc and sail through the trout at the Junction Pool. What an experience it must be for a trout to see these argent zeppelins go by. Shad have been known to go on up the Willowemoc to the Little Beaver Kill, passing the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, at Livingston Manor. According to Ed Van Put, a regional fisheries technician, shad have been seen a mile up the Little Beaver Kill, four hundred miles from the ocean, where they were stopped by a ten-foot waterfall.

I told that story to Boyd Kynard.

He said, "These guys are the Olympic fish. It has to do with swimming





"I contributed a lot to charity back when I thought I was going to die."

abilities, with response to new environments. This is your athlete fish."

Shad vary, right enough. I thought of my own Olympic fish—two and a half hours on the line at Lambertville. Had I not interfered, she would have gone up to the Little Beaver Kill, jumped that waterfall, jumped the Catskill divide, swum up the Hudson to Lake Champlain and down the Richelieu River to Montreal, gone up the Ottawa to Lake Nipissing and down the French River into Lake Huron and on across Superior and up the Pigeon River and on to the Lake of the Woods and Lake Winnipeg and Reindeer Lake and Lake Athabasca and the Great Slave Lake (doing the Methye Portage in a heavy rain) and down the Mackenzie to the Rat, and up the Rat to the Porcupine, and down the Porcupine to the Yukon River, and down

the Yukon River to the Bering Sea. It's a shame I ate her.

I asked Kynard why shad would go all the way from the Atlantic Ocean to a Catskill mountain brook when they could copulate in New Jersey. Why would shad in the Connecticut River, fight their way into an elevator car, ignore the creature comforts of the Holyoke Pool, and—at Turners Falls and Vernon—scale a couple of fish ladders to get to Bellows Falls?

He said, "I think I know the answer. I have a hypothesis, anyway. This is what, to me, seems to drive the whole migration. There must be a big selective advantage in going upstream, and in putting your offspring upstream, or you wouldn't do it, would you? The farther up you go, the less energy you have, the more

obstacles you encounter. So what's the advantage to the offspring? We have a little bit of data on this. I think they're putting their offspring at the head of the chow line."

Tributaries bring zooplankton into rivers. Plankton are what fingerling and juvenile shad eat. Plankton, for that matter, are what shad eat in all their adult years. One September, when large numbers of juvenile shad were in the Holyoke Pool—the thirty-odd miles of impounded water between Holyoke Dam and Turners Falls—Kynard and a graduate student monitored the plankton that came into the pool from upriver. (The spawning run, at that time, was stopped at Turners Falls.) The study showed a whole lot of plankton in the river at Turners Falls, of which nothing was left at Holyoke. "The zooplankton

had been grazed by all those shad in the Holyoke Pool. So my hypothesis is that what keeps these guys going farther and farther, when there are clear disadvantages to doing so, has to be an advantage for progeny. And the one advantage to progeny that we have documented is that there's more food—zooplankton—upstream for concentrations of juvenile shad than there is downstream. So, put your offspring at the head of the chow line. This hypothesis relies on the very well-documented fact that the larger you are as a prey species the better off you are. Even one extra millimetre will confer a survival advantage to you in the face of predation. When juvenile shad move down the river, they're subject to all sorts of riverine predators that eat them—smallmouth bass in particular."

"What else eats them?"

"Walleyes. White perch. Stripers. These guys—the juvenile shad—are coming down by the hundreds of millions, and they're all very tender and bite size."

In spring, sexually mature shad begin to enter their home rivers when the water temperature reaches about four to six degrees Celsius (about forty Fahrenheit), and they spawn when the temperature is between sixteen and twenty-two (sixty to seventy Fahrenheit). So, in effect, they have brackets around them. In the Connecticut River, they have, on average, forty-five days to make their run and complete the ritual sexing of their eggs.

In Kynard's words, "When they enter a river, the clock is ticking. They have varying degrees of energy, varying degrees of swimming ability. They're not feeding, so they have an unrenewable energy reserve that will take them only so far up the river, depending also on delays, water velocity (how hard they have to swim to get there), and water temperature. It is fairly well established that when water temperature gets to twenty-one they slow down, and by twenty-two they stop. They look for a suitable place to spawn. It's a race against time. If you're a shad, you take every opportunity to get as far upstream as you can, past every obstacle, before the water temperature reaches twenty-one degrees. The joker is that you never know what the environment is going to throw at you. You can have the fifty-year flood. You can

have low water. Through it all, you have to keep going, and go as fast and as far upstream as you can, because that's the only way your offspring have any chance to have an advantage."

When the Delaware River is just honkin', I told him, I have discovered that I can catch shad on people's lawns. After extreme and sustained rains—water over the banks—the center of the stream is a lethal rage of gray rolling waves. A couple of hundred miles above Philadelphia, I'm standing on somebody's lawn, in fairly calm but turbid water three feet deep. This is not quixotic. The fish—completely frustrated, anxious to go as far as possible—are up on the lawn, too. Kynard explains: "Come a big rain, the whole migration will stop for two weeks. Trying to save energy in slow water, they aren't doing anything—they're just hanging on. Out in the river, not only is the current heavy but turbidity is such that the shad can't go to the low slow water, because there's not enough light down there. They have no choice. They have to hang out way over to the side, maintain position, and just hope like hell it doesn't keep raining."

Out of our waders and into Kynard's office, we had been through a fair amount of this dialogue at the S. O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center, in Turners Falls, a small community in northern Massachusetts enabled by a dam built in 1798 at a natural pitch of the Connecticut River. Built to intercept logs, it also blocked the migration of fish, setting a fateful precedent as the first main-stem dam on a major river in North America. Thomas & Thomas bamboo fly rods are made at the intake end of the power canal there, and the Conte lab, two miles down, is not far from a generating station where the canal water spills through turbines and back to the river. Below Thomas & Thomas, a modest cluster of antique industrial structures soon gives way to open ground, forested at the edges, in which the swift current of the canal slows and spreads into something like a lake, flanked by a road but—in the better part of a mile—only a low pair of buildings, the seventeen-million-dollar Conte lab, nestled into the canal's right bank. Named in part for Silvio Conte, the Massachusetts congressman who made it happen, the lab was

SHOWCASE BY
FIROOZ ZAHEDI

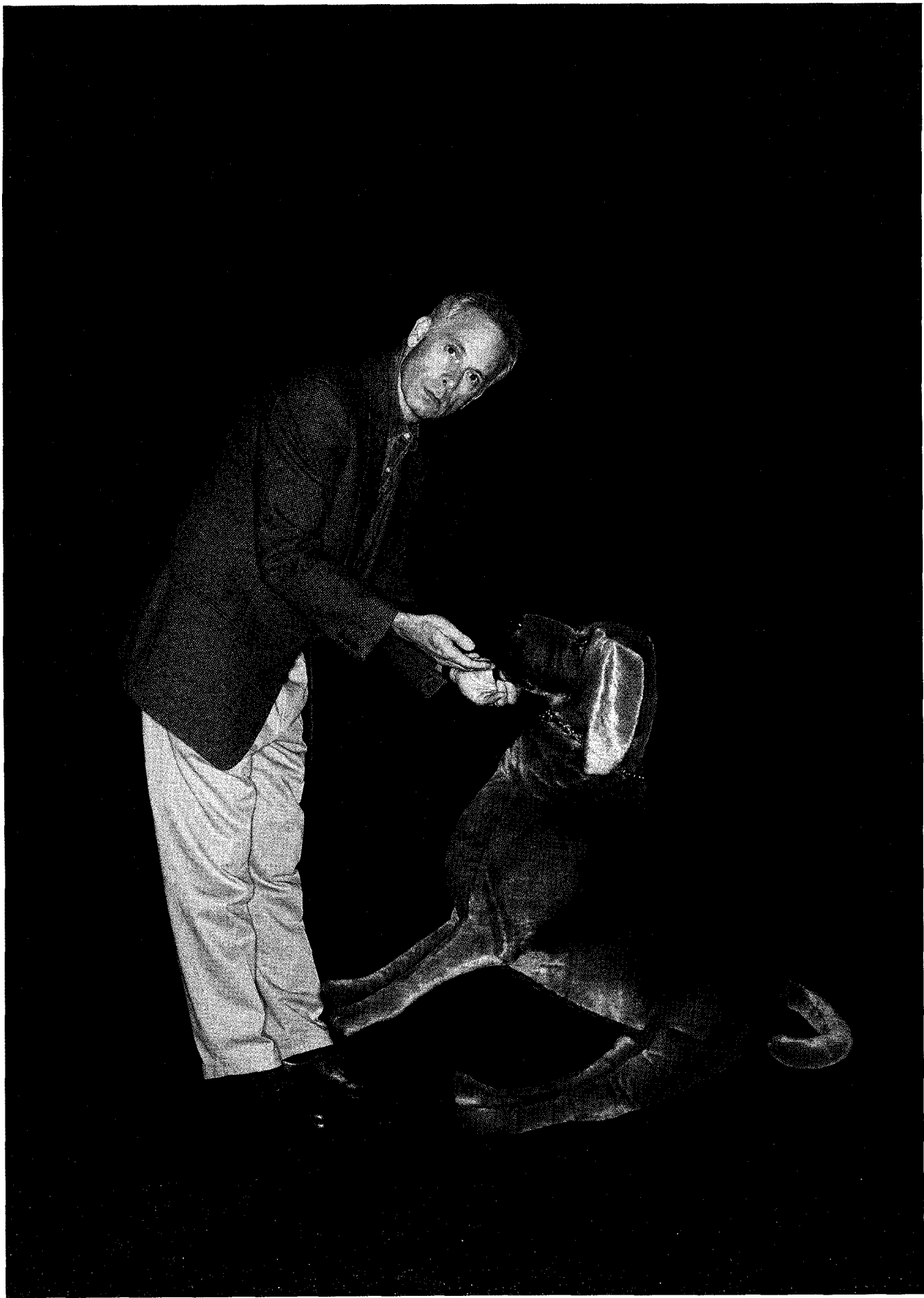
DOG STAR

Christopher Guest, the mockumentarian (he created the role of Nigel Tufnel, lead guitarist in "This Is Spinal Tap"), writes intricate scenarios for his actors, giving them motives, backgrounds, and outlines of marital dynamics—but no dialogue. "What sounds like a haphazard approach is just the opposite," Guest says. "The actors are so skilled in this way of working—they ad-lib in character, and he shoots the results—it's like having talented jazz players improvising. We know when the solos are coming." The actors love it—practically the whole cast from "Waiting for Guffman," his 1997 feature about a small Missouri town's sesquicentennial play, returned for his latest effort, "Best in Show," which follows five dogs and their owners through the Mayflower Dog Show.

The actors prepped with professional handlers to learn the trade secrets of leash work in the show ring. Guest invented a brisk, stiff-legged presentation lope that made his character, Harlan Pepper, appear eerily one with his bloodhound, Hubert. "I subscribed to *American Cooner*, something I'm sure you get as well," Guest says. "And I started to become enlightened, if that's the right word." His heartfelt ode to the breed, delivered in a thick-as-pine-tar North Carolina accent, is one of the film's comic highlights.

The idea for the work (which premieres this week at the Toronto International Film Festival) came to him when he and his wife, Jamie Lee Curtis, took their mutts, Henry and Lucy, to the local dog park, where they found poodle people disparaging the pugs, and pug people returning the favor. "There was an almost religious overtone to it," Guest says. "It became practically a microcosm of race and religion."

—Kevin Conley



Boyd Kynard's idea. It was built by the Department of the Interior and modelled on a lab on the Columbia River that is now a parking lot. It was also named for anadromous fish, which live in oceans and spawn in freshwater. Nimble, all other possibilities have been covered in language that would entertain W. S. Gilbert. If you live in freshwater but go out into the ocean to spawn, you are catadromous. Anadromous means "running up." Catadromous means "running down." If you are anadromous or catadromous, you are also diadromous. And if you're a fish that goes from freshwater to saltwater, or saltwater to freshwater, to eat or to survive drought but not to procreate, you are amphidromous.

Ordinarily, ichthyologists visit fish. At the Conte lab, it's the other way around. "Without a lab, we could not do experimental work; all we could do was field work," Kynard explained. After shad arrive at Turners Falls, a selected number might go into one of three long concrete flumes that suggest the containment chambers in a nuclear-fuel reprocessing plant. The fish hop uphill and upcurrent in pool-and-weir fishways built of wood and jigsawed into experimental geometries—open Vs, inviting trapezoids. Above each pool—each step of the ladder—is an antenna. The shad are wired and are broadcasting to the antennae, which are related to a computer. Using fly-tying vises, Dr. Alex Haro and Ted Castro-Santos, a graduate student, have bound No. 8 fishhooks to small cylindrical microchip tags in exactly the way you bind bucktail to a shad dart. The microchip rigs resemble shad darts. Haro and Castro-Santos hook them into the back end of the shad's dorsal fins. The shad don't seem to mind, possibly because they are each and all veterans of Holyoke Dam, showing raw spots and missing scales from the thrashing ride in the elevator.

The Ph.D.s on the lab's staff are also adjunct professors at the University of Massachusetts, in Amherst. Alex Haro wrote his doctoral dissertation on American eels, which are not ignored in the anadromous-fish lab, the fact notwithstanding that they are catadromous. Dr. Steve McCormick and Dr. Joe Zydlewski study salt-excreting cells in gills, and the rest of the complex physiology in transitions between river and sea. As

HIS COSTUME

Somehow I never stopped to notice that my father liked to dress as a woman. He had his sign language about women talking too much, and being stupid, but whenever there was a costume party he would dress like us, the tennis balls for breasts—balls for breasts—the long blond wig, the lipstick, he would sway his body with moves of gracefulness as if one being could be the whole universe, its ends curving back to come up from behind it. Six feet, and maybe one-eighty, one-ninety, he had the shapely legs of a male Grable—in a short skirt, he leaned against a bookcase pillar nursing his fifth drink, gazing around from inside his mascara purdah with those salty eyes. The woman from next door had a tail and ears, she was covered in Reynolds Wrap, she was Kitty Foyle, and my mother was in a tiny tuxedo, but he always won the prize. Those nights, he had a look of daring, a look of triumph, of having stolen back. And as far as I knew, he never threw up, as a woman, or passed out, or made those signals of scorn with his hands, just leaned, voluptuous, at ease, deeply present, as if sensing his full potential, crossing over into himself, and back, over, and back.

—Sharon Olds

one of McCormick's Ph.D. candidates intent on learning how much energy migrating shad burn away as they swim, Jill Leonard developed the laboratory's swimming respirometer—a vertical toroid tube about the size and shape of a truck tire, in which water flows around like river current and can be sped up or slowed down. Built into the respirometer's uppermost arc is a clear-plastic horizontal chamber, sized for one shad, in which the incumbent specimen swims in place under eyeball-to-eyeball scrutiny, taking on whatever current Leonard chooses. She measures, among other things, oxygen depletion—the oxygen requirements of shad at different swimming speeds.

In the natural Connecticut, down through steep woods from the power canal, some of these people fish for

shad, in a place they described as uncommon. Site unseen, I made a date to go with Steve McCormick at six-thirty one morning in late May. From my fishing diaries, this is the entry for that day: "Their place is called the Rock Dam, an imposing diabase ledge between the left bank and a large island. In the ledge close to the bank is a narrow gap, like an open door. You can cast a fly line across the confined river as it comes through that slot and drops into a twenty-foot pool. Beyond the pool is a pond eddy. Steve McCormick had to leave at eight. Having caught salmon smolts in Turners Falls and equipped them with acoustic tags, he went off to listen to the salmon in Hartford and beyond. Others from the Conte lab fishing at the Rock Dam this morning were Joe Zydlewski, Joe Kunkel, and Gabe Gries. At one point,

as many as nine fishermen were clustered there. Gries is an ecologist who works on juvenile salmon. He caught a shad. Joe Zydlewski took it—he wanted the gills. Joe Kunkel is doing a study with McCormick and Zydlewski to see how gill morphology changes as shad come into the river. I used a fly rod and a spinning rod. I used a flutter spoon. I used darts. I used lead-core leader. I used my brain, to the extent that it was working, and once again I could not get a shad out of the Connecticut River. It's as if I were a rejectee, an alien. The Rock Dam is as tight and intimate as it is natural and beautiful. Everybody else was fishing from dry ground in sneakers, while I was dressed up in neoprene stocking waders, sand guards, L.L. Bean felt-soled boots, and an Orvis vest bearing the orange-and-green emblem of the Delaware River Shad Fishermen's Association. I looked like a hapless astronaut, while these scientists stood on the ledge in their bluejeans, catching shad."

Kynard, as attentive to sturgeons as he is to shad, likes to point out that sturgeons are Cretaceous. That is, the species has existed in the world a hundred million years. This causes him to yawn in the direction of the crossopterygian coelacanthidae, so-called living fossils (also dating from the Cretaceous) that have turned up rarely in modern seas, inconveniencing Webster's Second International, which describes them as "extinct." Kynard says, "Biologists hunt the world for a coelacanth, and sturgeons are right here. When dinosaurs were walking around in shallow water, they were stepping on sturgeons."

Sturgeons run up to spawn in most American coastal rivers. In Nova Scotia, I have seen them—seven feet long—trapped in shad weirs in the Minas Basin. They inhabit tubs in the Conte lab. The experiments of Erika Henyey, one of Kynard's grad students, are meant to show how they orient to bottom structures in rivers—shortnose sturgeons, Atlantic sturgeons, highly endangered pallid sturgeons. The fish anatomist Willy Bemis, of the University of Massachusetts, has said of Kynard and his graduate students, "He doesn't hang around if they're not good. He's stiff. As a result, it's a distinction to have been trained by him. Moreover, he is the very best field

biologist I've ever known. You can go anywhere with Boyd. He'll teach you to observe things you would never have seen by yourself and that other people either aren't able or willing to teach you. The animal sign. The little scrape in a stream. He's a real honest-to-God naturalist. He might not tell you where to fish with a fishing rod, but he'll tell you what you need to know to get started. When you're out there stomping around with him, it's like being out there when you're fourteen."

When Boyd Kynard was fourteen, he fished with a cane pole, "a little short six- or seven-foot cane pole," he says, "which I would go out and cut in the swamps—cut my own cane poles, cure my own cane poles." Sometimes, he cut big ones: "Thirteen, fourteen feet; drying them was a long process, seeing what kind of action they had."

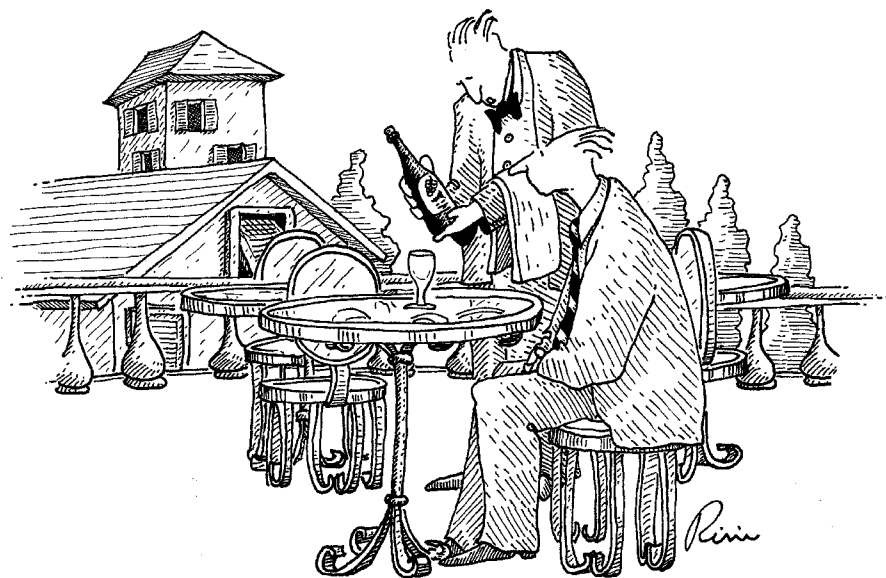
"No reel?"

"No reel. I just pulled fish straight up and out. There was native cane in cane-brakes all over the swamps. You pick exactly the kind of pole you want, put eyes on it, and wade out into the oxbows and lower a minnow from the pole."

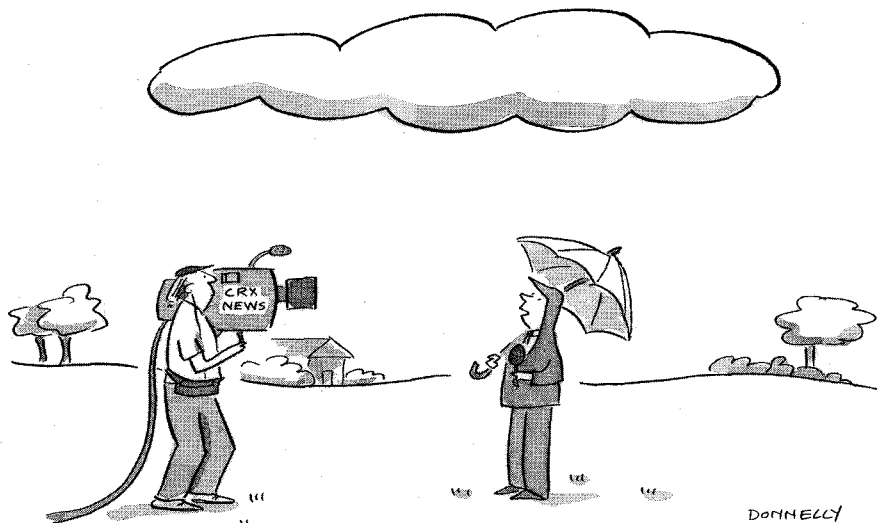
Kynard does not talk Massachusetts. A shad is not a piece of broken crockery. A bod to him does not suggest a poet. In his adult life, though, he has lived in the Pacific Northwest, in the desert Southwest, and in enough other places so that his phrases emerge in a phonic palimpsest. It takes a while to hear your way through them and into Mississippi.

With a few feet of fixed line on those homemade poles, he was fishing in the meandering rivers of the central part of the state. He fished the Strong, the Yazoo, and, most often, the Pearl. He trapped. He kept snakes in his back yard. The Pearl was two miles from his home, in north Jackson. He would go there on his bicycle. Alone, or with others, he camped there. He was on the river twelve months a year. "It's a serious river. It was the nearest wilderness. The rest of it was farms. Crude farms. Once you got to the Pearl, that was it, there was nobody lived there, it wasn't anything but snakes and alligators and fish and water and trees and swamp." He caught bass, crappies, catfish. There were sturgeons in the Pearl. Paddlefish. Gar. He was fifteen when he hooked his first bowfin. "Bowfin?"

"Think of a coelacanth. A primitive, voracious fish. Twenty-five to thirty pounds. You'll hook a lot more than you'll ever land. The inside of their mouth is solid bone, with not much to hook onto. Lower a minnow in the oxbows, and my God Almighty you're like five feet away from these fish. You'd be in there with these monster fish, and when they'd grab ahold you weren't sure who had ahold of who." From a canoe, he was lowering a minnow when he attracted that first bowfin. "He weighed at least thirty. I got him up near the surface, and he was running at the boat—right underneath the surface, running right for the boat. All I could do was hold the pole



"eBay '99."



*"At this point, it's still not classified as a hurricane—
it's still being called a raindrop."*

up. His head was like seven inches thick. You're in a canoe and a fish is charging and you wouldn't normally be afraid. But that guy was so big and so aggressive. He bent the rod right under and broke the line. That made me a bowfin fisherman."

"When did it dawn on you that you were never going to leave this field?"

"Quite early. When we moved to Jackson—from Bruce, Mississippi, a small lumber town—I saw my first tropical-fish store. This was 1950. I was twelve. In north Jackson, there were very few stores, but a guy opened a tropical-fish store. We hadn't been there three weeks when he came. The place stood alone—this small, old building, no others around it. I had never known of anybody who had fish in captivity or used fish for anything other than to eat. You know, catch and eat—that's what you did with fish. And here was this little tiny store, like six feet wide and ten feet long. I walked in, and there's these little beautiful fish. I remember thinking, You can buy fish in a store! You gotta be kidding me. You know what I did that summer? I mastered the techniques of not only housing and caring for them but breeding them. I would go down to the pickle factory and get five-gallon pickle jars. I learned to put a kerosene-soaked string around a pickle jar. You light it, and it expands the glass under the string. You just take the top right off. I must have made fifteen or twenty aquariums, and I used

them for breeding different pairs. See, I'm so cheap I would buy two fish at the tropical-fish store, and in two months I'd have forty. I was selling them to other kids. I knew a good thing when I saw it."

He bred zebra danios. ("They were my egg-layers.") He bred swordtails, mollies, guppies. He sold them for ten cents apiece, undercutting the tropical-fish man by fifty per cent. This went on for three years. "Ask guys who work with fish for a living if they raised fish when they were young. You can't just look at one and say, 'There's a fish.' You really have to want to get under those fishes' skins. You really have to understand how to make a situation that fish want to breed in. This implies a great deal of understanding, even for zebra danios. I knew when I was in the eighth grade that I wanted to be a biologist."

"Did you eat the fish you caught?"

"Of course. The bowfins were real cottony and had a lot of bones in them. You had to marinate those guys."

Catfish were a whole different thing.

"We would camp out on a beach. There were lots of beautiful sand beaches on the river. You always set out catfish trotlines. Trotlines and Southerners are almost inseparable. We'd put chicken livers and gizzards on there, for channel catfish—oh, goodness! We had the fire going. When we'd catch 'em, we'd skin 'em down, fillet 'em, throw 'em right there on the fire—I mean the fish was

not even fifteen minutes out of the water, and if you've eaten fish like that it's a whole different thing. We'd just do that all night."

When he was seventeen, he became a Y-camp counsellor, on the swiftly flowing Strong River, where he taught canoeing, camping, tree identification, and survival skills, and led overnight canoe trips twenty miles down the Strong to its junction with the Pearl, and fifteen more down the slower, wider Pearl. There "your attention switched to catfish." Five miles below the junction was an immense limestone outcrop ("with layers of quartzite, white and crystalline") that knocked the river right back where it came from—bent it around like the head of a paper clip. At the curve, opposite the outcrop, was the steepest sandbar he would ever see—"as vertical a sandbar as you can pile up sand." The water in the curve was "probably forty or fifty feet deep." Kynard and the others were in fifteen-foot Grumman canoes—a hundred per cent aluminum from their molded seats and machined thwarts to their flotation chambers. Traversing the deep curve, Kynard and the others heard an unearthly, weird sound. The air was still, the current silent, but out of somewhere—what else but the river?—came deep down-register tones, halfway across the scale between bull and bullfrog. They camped on top of the outcrop. Kynard took a Grumman, went out, and heard the sound again. He decided that it was coming through the water, and that it was being picked up and amplified by the flotation chambers—in effect, sealed drums—in the bow and stern of the canoe. After he had crossed the deep curve, the sound was gone. He turned around, went back, and heard it again. He gave some thought to bowfin, but more to catfish. "I know catfish make sounds. They have a bone that they rub against their air bladder. You can take a channel catfish out of water, and he'll sit there making sounds. I, of course, had brought my trotlines. I baited them with chicken parts, and caught two of the biggest catfish I'd ever seen. That must have been some concentration of fish." For years, in Grumman canoes, he listened in other places. Nowhere but in that one place has he ever heard the catfish chorus.

After three years in the Marine Corps, Kynard majored in English at Millsaps

College, Jackson, and double-majored in biology. A moment was fast arriving when, as a biologist, he would have to decide between fish and mammals. It was not a long moment. "Fish lend themselves to getting up close and personal," he says. "I want to be able to understand as closely as I can what's going on with these guys. Fish—because of their limited sensory ability and limited ability to get away from you—would lend themselves to an up-close-and-personal approach more than, say, a beaver would."

His choice was reinforced by eighteen postgraduate months at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. During this period, he was married to Janice Ray, whom he had met at Millsaps. (Their daughter, Kari, is a journalist. Their son, Brian, is a field technician at the Conte lab.) After Ocean Springs, Kynard went into a master's program at Mississippi State, where he worked on the behavior of mosquito fish and their physiological resistance to DDT. Somewhere along the line, he came upon a book called "Behavioral Aspects of Ecology," by Peter Klopfer, found himself reading the whole of it in one night, and decided that behavior was going to be his field. "I was ready to be imprinted."

Imprinted and advised. His "major professor," a herpetologist who happened to come from Oregon, said to him, "Boyd, you're interested in evolution, and individuals, and behavior. You're not going to be able to find that in the South. I think you've got to get out."

Kynard studied journals to see who was doing what on the behavioral ecology of fish. The field seemed to be concentrated in Honolulu, Miami, and Seattle. The School of Fisheries at the University of Washington was the largest and oldest in the United States. Kynard spent five and a half years there, completing a doctoral dissertation on the behavioral ecology of the threespine stickleback. He did his field work in a kayak on a glacial lake in the foothills of the eastern Cascades. He had a microscope, preserving jars, and other lab equipment in the kayak. He had covered the deck with a small platform he could lie on. After observing a fish long enough to note any idiosyncrasies, he would "collect him and collect his nest."

Within six years, he was a tenured

professor at the University of Arizona, in Tucson, where he created the undergraduate fisheries program and developed a strong ambition to establish a desert-fish institute. Arizona was not interested. In 1978, ignoring his tenure, he joined the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and was assigned to a unit in Massachusetts attached to the state university. He had never seen a shad. He was there to work in marine fisheries, but after he saw a shad he transferred into migratory fish. His work on shad and sturgeon has ranged, for the most part, between northern Connecticut and southern Vermont, but has led him in related ways to China, Brazil, Romania, Puerto Rico, and most shad rivers on the two sides of North America. In interior Puerto Rico, where flash floods—"flashy beyond belief"—can turn a stream into frothing "liquid mud," various fish have developed an ability to go back and forth from fresh to salt as often and as rapidly as they need to. In Pennsylvania and Maryland, Kynard helped the shad specialist Richard St. Pierre work out the restoration program that has to make its way through four huge dams in the Susquehanna River. As a representative of the United States government, he has worked with "high-level conservation officials" in China to illuminate the life histories of migrating Chinese fish. His research in Brazil has been similar. Willy Bemis has said, "When most people are confronted with new environments, their eyes glaze over. It's all too much for a while. My impression is that Boyd goes into a new environment and begins making original observations immediately."

Kynard is the only American in the Danube Delta Research Institute. When I went shad fishing with him in South Hadley in May, 1999, he was still feeling traces of jet lag after flying home from Romania. Carrying 55-75-kilohertz hydrophones, he had spent three weeks tracking sturgeon up the Danube, with Dr. Radu Suciuc and a three-man Romanian support team. Kynard was the river pilot. It was his boat. He had bought it in Arkansas and shipped it to Romania in a forty-five-foot box. The Romanians named it Sam, because it came from America. It had a seventy-five-horsepower outboard motor. Telling me some of this as he stood in the Connecticut that morning casting darts for

shad, he said, "All my trips come back with some kinds of stories; they just don't include a war."

Above river kilometre 130 is a zone of intense commercial fishing on the Danube, a drift gill-net fishery, where Kynard and company picked up—mainly from Gypsy fishermen—forty-four sturgeons on the spawning run. They were stellate sturgeons, averaging four and a half feet in length and fifteen to thirty pounds. In addition to fitting them with ultrasonic telemetry tags, it was highly advisable to get them out of the heaviest commercial gill-netting zone before releasing them back into the river. On Sam, which was six feet wide and twenty feet long, they could carry only six of the big fish at a time. They made a canvas sling, pinched it off at the two ends like a brioche, rigged it to a twelve-volt pump that kept water in it, slung it from gunwale to gunwale, and carried six sturgeons upstream to river kilometre 178. They turned around and went back for more. When it was time for lunch, they ate green onions, feta, salami, bread, and jam. The Danube there is the border between Romania and Ukraine. They made the seven round trips in two days. When it was time for dinner, they ate green onions, feta, salami, bread, and jam. A hundred miles up the Danube from the Black Sea, all forty-four wired sturgeons went back into the river and most took off upstream. Kynard and the Romanians had no idea where stellates spawn in the Danube. Their purpose was to find out.

Going up the river, they stopped at one-kilometre intervals and put the hydrophones over the side. The hydrophones, with their long arms, were like boom mikes on a movie stage. There was no sound from the sturgeons. Kynard heard only the soft rustle of sediment moving in the river. A 0-1,000-hertz hydrophone is so sensitive that it can hear sand grains in motion, even in very quietly moving water, as Kynard would demonstrate to Willy Bemis, me, and others one day in Willy's boat in the Holyoke Pool. A relaxing and soothing sound, not unlike the recorded surf played above the cribs of infants, it was audible geomorphology—you were listening to mountains on their way to the sea. The sound is the signature of rivers, Kynard said. The Danube's differs

from the Yangtze's, the Yangtze's from the Connecticut's. He had never heard the Yukon River. With its great load of glacial flour—jagged particles of fresh-ground rock—the Yukon would sound like a chain saw.

At the Danube River's kilometre 250, he had not caught up with the sturgeons. Before long, the Danube, having crossed eastern Romania, became the boundary between Romania and Bulgaria. At river kilometre 500, he had still not heard the sturgeons, nor at 600. The Danube is a braided river, full of islands, and Sam the fishing boat tracked all channels and both sides of islands as well as the left and right banks. In all, Kynard figures, he tracked about fifteen hundred kilometres, stopping once a kilometre to listen for the fish. Kynard and company camped out all the way. Each morning for breakfast, they had green onions, feta, salami, bread, and jam.

This was at the height of the 1998-99 Kosovo war, when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was bombing Serbia intensely. Danube kilometre 830 is the Serbian border. On the east side of the river, Romania continues, but on the west side Bulgaria ends and Serbia begins. When Sam had progressed as far as Calafat (Romania) and Vidin (Bulgaria), which flank the Danube at kilometre 815, the hydrophones had still heard nothing from the sturgeons' acoustic tags. Spawning sturgeons swim side by side in pairs. In Kynard's words, "They have a form of communication that is probably tactile." The male has a large anal fin, which cups the milt. The milt and the caviar are blended by the current. Ichthyologists would not call the eggs caviar. A single female sturgeon may carry a million five hundred thousand eggs. Sturgeons engaged in sex and simultaneously broadcasting to hydrophones will outbolero "Bolero."

As the boat had come ever nearer to Serbia, other traffic had diminished on the river. Along the Bulgarian side were towers, in which were guards equipped with machine guns and telescopes. "The Bulgarians were not happy about the hydrophones on their side of the river." When the guards reached for the telescopes, it was not clear—from the water—if they were reaching for the telescopes or the guns. Sam had a cabin enclosure and looked pretty much

like a fishing boat, but Kynard, in earphones sitting by a receiver with a hydrophone shaft sticking out a window into the water, created a somewhat martial impression. In a specialized way, he had become known up and down the Danube, but not to these Bulgarian tower guards. Even the Hungarians, isolated by dams and far to the north, were aware of his Romanian project. They had asked him to come to Hungary and track the sterlet sturgeon, a freshwater species, because sterlet is good caviar. Kaluga sturgeon, pallid sturgeon—there are numerous species of sturgeon and four genres, three of which are subjects of studies by Kynard. See Bemis, W. E. and B. Kynard (1997), "Sturgeon Rivers: An Introduction to Acipenseriform Biogeography and Life History," *Environmental Biology of Fishes* 48:167-183. The acipenseriform sturgeons are the most typical and common: in North America, the shortnose, Atlantic, lake, white, and green; the sevruga and beluga in, for example, the Black and Caspian Seas. At Galati, on the Romanian Danube, Kynard spoke at a 1998 symposium involving all the Danube countries. He advocated a Danube River compact for sturgeon conservation.

In Calafat and Vidin in May, 1999, there was not much going for the compact. The Romanian border military at Calafat told Kynard and company not to proceed, and made them sign a paper stating, in effect, their awareness that NATO was attacking more than fish. They pushed on. Kynard listened to the water, hearing nothing. As the boat drew closer to the Serbian border, absolutely all other activity disappeared. More kilometres, more silence. They kept going, and stopping to listen. "The river was deserted. There were no boats—zero. It was a war zone." They kept going, and stopping to listen, until they heard bombs.

Emplaced in bedrock between Romania and Serbia, at river kilometre 985, is a dam called Iron Gate II. Nothing swims past it. Having failed to catch up with his forty-four sturgeons, Kynard decided that they might have gone on to spawn at the dam. He speculates, "Maybe all sturgeon-spawning in the Danube is in Serbia, because they spawn over rocky bottoms, from gravel upward. Basically, the war stopped me from finding out." ♦

SKETCHBOOK BY
MICHAEL ROBERTS

BRAZIL NUTS

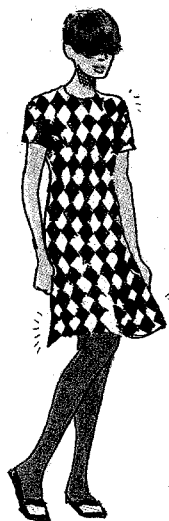
When the girl from Ipanema goes walking these days, she'd be well advised to wear track shoes. That way, she can outpace the hordes of agents stampeding across the Brazilian sands under orders to bring back something tall and tan and young and lovely. Gisele Bündchen, the reigning supermodel, has made the world notice Brazil again, and the fashion crowd can't get enough.

The marvel is that on its five-hundredth birthday Brazil is still frisky enough to enjoy its Big Fashion Moment, because these Big Moments don't occur too often. The last, presumably, was a Carmen Miranda minute in 1949. Recently, Brazil has tried to make up for lost time by hosting not one but two fashion weeks, in a couple of vast shopping malls outside São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Gisele was there, as was Isabella Blow, the English trend-spotter (in a pink mask and something like a silver shower curtain). There were assorted French journalists, heat-seeking TV crews, and New York buyers, some of whom seemed to be surprised by the Brazilian habit of treating fashion shows like soccer matches and whooping at the catwalk.

In São Paulo, they showed rain-forest-rubber dresses, diamanté-encrusted flip-flops, and outfits of patchwork made in shantytowns. In Rio, they showed the bikini, the bikini, and, oh yes, the bikini. In sequins, in florals, in crocodile, with fringing, and covered in seashells. The local reporters kept posing the question "So will Brazil become an important part of the fashion calendar?" Well, when thirty or so Gisele look-alikes sway down the catwalk, hair swooshing, it's not strictly about what they're wearing—it's whether you notice that they're wearing anything at all.

—M. R.



A statuette of a blindfolded Brazilian goddess is echoed in a fringed piece by the designer Márcia Ganem and by the long bangs at Alexandre Herchcovitch's show. The dress is of rain-forest rubber and crystals.



A jelly-bean print dress by Faúse Haten; Patrícia Viera's suede tie-dyed skirt; diamanté-encrusted flip-flops for men by Walter Rodrigues.



The Brazilian model Gisele backstage with the Bahian musician Carlinhos Brown.



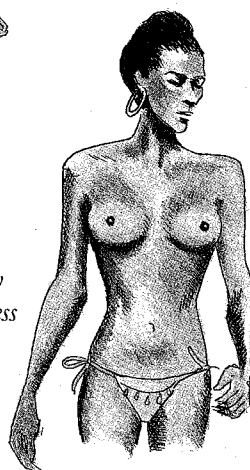
Dona Teresa, a shantytown coöperative worker, sews patchwork for the M. Officer jeans line.



The Rio designer Adam Mendes and his shell-encrusted bikini; Glorinha Paranagua with her straw-hut handbags; Lenny Niemeyer adjusts a bra made of Brazilian alligator.



Straw-look bikini top by Lenny; topless bikini by Rosa Chá.



Turbans and platforms at the Carmen Miranda Museum, in Rio.



The stylist Isabella Blow with models in swim trunks by Blue Man.

FICTION

WATER CHILD

BY EDWIDGE DANTICAT



The letter came on the first of the month, as usual. It was written, as most of them were, in near-calligraphic style, in indigo-blue ink, on see-through airmail paper.

Ma Chère Nadine,

We are so happy to have this occasion to put pen to paper to write to you. How are you? All is well with us, grace à Dieu, except your father, whose health is, as always, unreliable. Today it is his knees. Tomorrow it will be something else. You know how it is when you are old. He and I both thank you for the money you sent last month. We know it is difficult for you, but we are grateful. This month your father hopes to see yet another doctor. We have not heard your voice in a while and our ears ache for it. Please call us.

She signed it, "Your mother and father who embrace you very tightly."

Three weeks had gone by since the letter arrived, and Nadine still hadn't called. She had raided her savings to wire double the usual amount but hadn't

called. Instead she took the letter out each day as she ate a tuna melt for lunch in the hospital cafeteria, where each first Friday for the last two years she had added a brownie to her meal for scheduled variety.

Every time she read the letter, she tried to find something else between the lines, a note of sympathy, commiseration, condolence. But it simply wasn't there. The more time went by, the more brittle and fragile the letter became. Each time she held the paper between her fingers she wondered how her mother had not torn it with the pen she'd used to compose each carefully inscribed word. How had the postal workers in both Port-au-Prince and Brooklyn not lacerated the thin page and envelope? And how had the letter not turned to dust while rubbing against the lining of the left pocket of her nurse's uniform during the bus ride to work? Or in her

purse in her locker, in the artificial heat all day long?

She carefully folded the letter once again and replaced it in her purse as one of her colleagues approached the small corner table by the window that she occupied in solitude for a whole hour each working day. The colleague, Josette, kissed her on both cheeks while fumbling in her pocket for lunch money. As Nadine's lunch hour was winding down, Josette's was just beginning.

Nadine smiled both at Josette and to herself at this ability of Josette's to make an ordinary encounter feel so intimate, then turned her face to the view outside, to the brown buildings and their barred windows, coated with a thin sheet of early-January frost. She let her eyes linger on the nursing station of the psych ward across the alley and entertained a vision she often had of seeing a patient dive out of one of the windows. Would

DANIEL MIRER

she leap out of her chair, run to the elevator, down to the alley separating the two buildings, or would she simply sit there and finish the last quarter glass of her skim milk?

"Ms. Hinds is back from I.C.U.," Josette was saying. "She's so *sezi* about not being able to talk that Dr. Vega had to give her a sedative."

Nadine and Josette worked both ends of Ear, Nose, and Throat and saw many post-op patients wake up bewildered to discover that their total laryngectomies meant that they would no longer be able to use their voices to communicate. No matter how the doctors and nurses prepared them, it was still a shock.

Josette always gave Nadine a report on the patients when she came to take over the table. She was one of the younger Haitian R.N.s, one of those who came to Brooklyn in early childhood and spoke English with no accent at all, but she liked to throw in a Creole word here and there in conversation to flaunt her origins. Aside from the brief lunch encounters, and times when one or the other needed a bit of extra help with a patient, they barely spoke at all.

"I am going now," Nadine said, rising from her seat. "My throne is yours."

When she returned to her one-bedroom condo in Canarsie that evening, Nadine was greeted by voices from the large television set that she kept turned on twenty-four hours a day. Along with the uneven piles of newspapers and magazines scattered between the fold-out couch and the floor-to-ceiling bookshelves in her living room, the television was her way of bringing voices into her life that required neither reaction nor response. At thirty-two, she had tried other hobbies—jogging, journal writing, drawing, Internet surfing—but these tasks had demanded either too much effort or too much superficial interaction with other people.

She took off the white sneakers that she wore at work and remained standing to watch the last few minutes of a news broadcast. It wasn't until a game show had begun that she pressed the playback button on her beeping answering machine.

Her one message was from Eric, her former beau, suitor, lover, the near father of her nearly born child.

"*Alo, allô*, hello," he stammered, creating his own odd pauses between Creole, French, and English, like the electively mute, newly arrived immigrant children whose worried parents brought them in for consultations, even though there was nothing wrong with their vocal cords.

"Haven't heard from you." He chose English. Long pause. "O.K. Bye."

Whenever he called her now, which was about once a month since their breakup, she removed the microcassette from the answering machine and placed it on the altar she had erected on top of the dresser in her bedroom. It wasn't anything too elaborate. There was a framed drawing that she had made of a cocoa-brown, dewy-eyed baby that could as easily have been a boy as a girl, the plump fleshy cheeks resembling hers and the high forehead resembling his. Next to the plain wooden frame were a dozen now dried red roses that Eric had bought her as they'd left the clinic after the procedure. She had once read about a shrine to unborn children in Japan, where water was poured over little altars of stone to honor them, so she had filled her favorite drinking glass with water and a small pebble and had added that to her own shrine, along with a total of now three microcassettes with messages from Eric, messages she had never returned.

That night, the apartment seemed oddly quiet in spite of the TV voices. She took out her mother's letter for its second reading of the day, ran her fingers down the delicate page, and reached for the phone to dial her parents' number. She'd almost called many times in the last three months but had lost her nerve, thinking that her voice might betray all that she could not say. She nearly dialled the whole thing this time. There were only a few numbers left when she put the phone down, tore the letter into two, then four, then eight, then countless pieces, collapsed among her old magazines and newspapers, and wept quietly.

Another letter arrived at Nadine's house a week later. It was on the same kind of airmail paper, but this time the words were meticulously typed. The "a"s and "o"s, which had been struck over many times, created underlayers, shadows, and small holes within the vowels' perimeters.

Ma chère Nadine,

Your father and I thank you very much for the extra money. Your father used it to see a doctor, not about his knees, but his prostate that the doctor says is inflamed. Not to worry, he was given some medications and it seems as if he will be fine for a while. All the tests brought us short for the monthly expenses, but we will manage. We would like so much to talk to you. We wait every Sunday afternoon, hoping that you will return to our beautiful routine. We pray that we have not abused your generosity, but you are our only child and we only ask for what we need. You know how it is when you are old. We have tried to call you, but we are always greeted by your answering machine. In any case, we wait to hear from you.

Your mother and father who embrace you tightly.

The next day, Nadine ignored her tuna melt altogether to read the letter over many times. She did not even notice the lunch hour pass, and Josette was standing over her at the table sooner than she expected. Josette, like all the other nurses, knew not to ask any questions about Nadine's past, present, future, or her international-looking mail. Word circulated quickly from old employees to new arrivals that Nadine Marie Osnac was not a friendly woman. Anyone who had sought detailed conversations with her, or who had shown interest in sharing the table while she was sitting there, had met only with cold silence and a blank stare out to the psych ward, where the winter frost was still clinging to the window bars. Josette, however, still occasionally ventured a social invitation, since they were both from the same country and all.

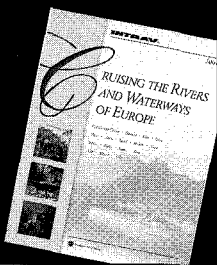
"Some of the girls are going to the city after work," Josette was saying. "A little *bambòch* to celebrate Ms. Hinds' discharge tomorrow."

"No, thanks," Nadine said, departing from the table a bit more abruptly than usual.

That same afternoon, Ms. Hinds began throwing things across her small private room, one of the few in the ward. Nadine nearly took a flower vase in the face as she rushed in to help. Unlike the other patients in the ward, Ms. Hinds was a nonsmoker. She was also much younger—twenty-five years old. When Nadine arrived, Ms. Hinds was thrashing about so much that the nurses, worried that she would yank out the metal tube inserted in her neck and suffocate, were trying to pin her down to put restraints on her arms and legs. Na-

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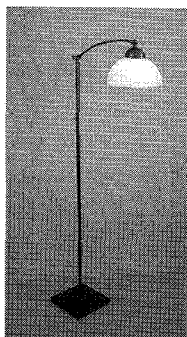


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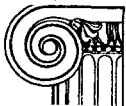
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dine quickly joined in the struggle, assigning herself Ms. Hinds' right arm, pockmarked from months of I.V.s in hard-to-conquer veins.

"Where's Dr. Vega?" Josette shouted as she caught one of Ms. Hinds' random kicks in her chest. Nadine lost her grip on the I.V. arm. She was looking closely at Ms. Hinds' face, her eyes tightly shut beneath where her eyebrows used to be, her thinner lower lip protruding defiantly past her upper one as though she were preparing to spit long distance in a contest, her whole body hairless under the cerulean-blue hospital gown, which came with neither a bonnet nor a hat to protect her now completely bald head.

"The doctor's on his way," one of the male nurses said. He had a firm hold of Ms. Hinds' left leg but could not pin it down to the bed long enough to restrain it.

"Leave her alone," Nadine finally suggested to the others.

They all looked up at her at the same time, their own exhaustion and frustration forcing them to release Ms. Hinds' extremities. One by one, they slipped a few steps back to protect themselves. With her need to struggle suddenly gone, Ms. Hinds coiled into a fetal position and sank into the middle of the bed.

"Let me be alone with her," Nadine said.

The others lingered awhile, as if not wanting to leave, but they had other patients to see to, so, one at a time, they backed out the door.

"Ms. Hinds, is there something you want to tell us?" Nadine lowered the bed rail to give Ms. Hinds a limited sense of freedom.

Ms. Hinds opened her mouth wide, trying to force air past her lips, but all that came out was the hiss of oxygen and mucus filtering through the tube in her neck.

Nadine looked over at the night table, where there should have been a pad and pen, but Ms. Hinds had knocked them over onto the floor with the flower arrangements and magazines her parents had brought for her.

Nadine walked over and picked up the pad and pen and handed them to Ms. Hinds.

"I am here, Ms. Hinds. Go ahead."

Ms. Hinds grabbed the pad eagerly, scribbled down a few quick words, then

held it up for Nadine to read. At first Nadine could not understand the handwriting. It was unsteady and hurried and the words ran together, but she sounded them out, one at a time, with some encouragement from Ms. Hinds, who moved her head a few inches up and down when Nadine guessed correctly.

"I cannot speak," Nadine made out.

"That's right," Nadine said. "You cannot express yourself the way you used to."

Ms. Hinds grabbed the pad again and scribbled another sentence. "I am an elementary school teacher."

"I know," Nadine said.

"WHY ARE THEY SENDING ME HOME LIKE THIS?"

"We are sending you home," Nadine said, "because we have done all we can for you here. Now you must work with a speech therapist. You can get an artificial larynx, a voice box. There are many options. The speech therapist will help you."

It was a pep talk that Nadine hated giving to the patients, the "you will make it after all" talk.

That night at home, Nadine found herself more exhausted than usual. With a television movie as white noise, she dialed Eric's home phone number, hoping that she was finally ready to hear his voice for more than the twenty-five seconds her answering machine allowed.

His wife answered the phone, and to avoid initiating a conversation Nadine listened. She listened to the many "Hello"s of the wife and she listened to the wife's own television in the background, which was on a different channel than hers; she heard something drop, maybe a dinner plate that the wife was picking up from the family table after a meal; she listened to a young child's voice scream, "Papi, Papi, Mommy broke something." And at last she heard Eric's voice growing louder, moving closer to the phone, speaking gently to his wife in French, "*Qu'est-ce qu'il y a, chérie?*" Then she heard the transfer from the wife's breath to his, and she hoped that perhaps he would recognize her breathing on the other end of the line, but he said his own series of "Hello"s and then hung up.

She picked up the phone again to call him back to say something predictable like "It is time she knew." But maybe

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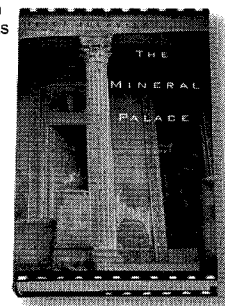
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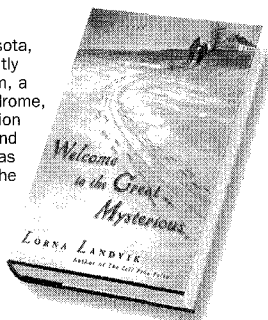
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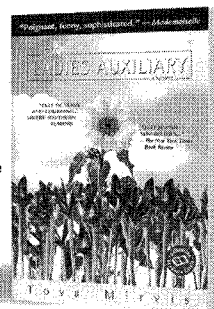
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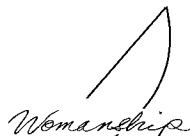


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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

the wife already knew. So she decided to call her parents instead. Talking to them always made her wish for a life where children were parented even after they had married and moved into a house down the street. Ten years ago her parents had sold everything they owned, had moved from what passed for a lower-middle-class neighborhood to one on the edge of a slum, in order to send her to nursing school abroad. Ten years ago she had dreamed of seeing the world, of making her own way in it. Ten years ago she had desired her solitude more than anything. These were the intangibles that she had proposed to her mother the seamstress and her father the camion driver in the guise of a nursing career. This is what they had sacrificed everything for. But she always knew that she would repay them. And she had, with half her salary every month, and sometimes more. In return what she got was the chance to parent them rather than have them parent her. Talking to them, however, always made her wish to be the one guarded, rather than the guardian, to be reassured now and then that some wounds could heal, that some decisions would not haunt her forever.

"Manman." Her voice immediately dropped to a whisper when her mother's came over the phone line, squealing with happiness.

"Papa, it is Nadine." For every decibel Nadine's voice dropped, her mother's rose. "My love, we were so worried about you. How are you? We were so worried."

"I'm fine, Manman."

"You sound cold. You sound down. We have to start planning again when you can come or we can come see you, as soon as Papa can travel."

"How is Papa?"

"He is right here. Let me put him on. He would be very glad to speak with you."

Suddenly her father was on the phone, his tone calmer, but excited in its own way. "We were waiting so long for this call, *chérie*."

"I know, Papa. I am sorry I haven't called."

They never spoke of sad and difficult things during these phone calls, of money or illnesses or doctors' visits. Papa always downplayed his aches and pains, which her mother would detail in the letters. There was no time for anything but joy. Events were relayed briefly, a list of accomplish-

ments, no discussion of failures or pain, which could spoil moods for days, weeks, and months, until the next phone call.

"Do you have a boyfriend?" Her mother took back the phone. Nadine could imagine her skipping around their living room like a child's ball bouncing. "Is there anyone in your life?"

"I have to go, Manman."

"So soon?"

"I work early tomorrow. I promise I will call again."

The next day, Nadine watched as Ms. Hinds packed her things and changed into a bright-yellow oversized sweatsuit and matching cap while waiting for the doctor to come and sign her discharge papers.

"My mother bought me this hideous outfit," Ms. Hinds wrote on the pad, which was now half filled with words: commands to the nurses, updates to her parents left over from the previous afternoon's visit. Ms. Hinds climbed up on the bedside closer to the door, her bony legs dangling. She reached up and stroked the protruding tip of the metal tube in her neck.

"Is someone coming for you?" Nadine asked.

"My parents," she wrote.

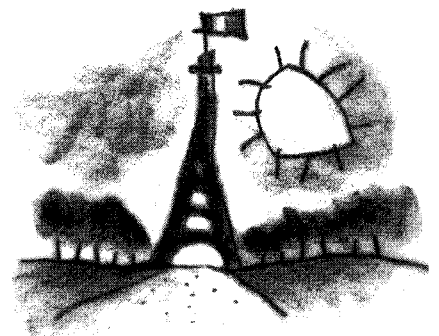
"Good," Nadine said. "The doctor will be here soon."

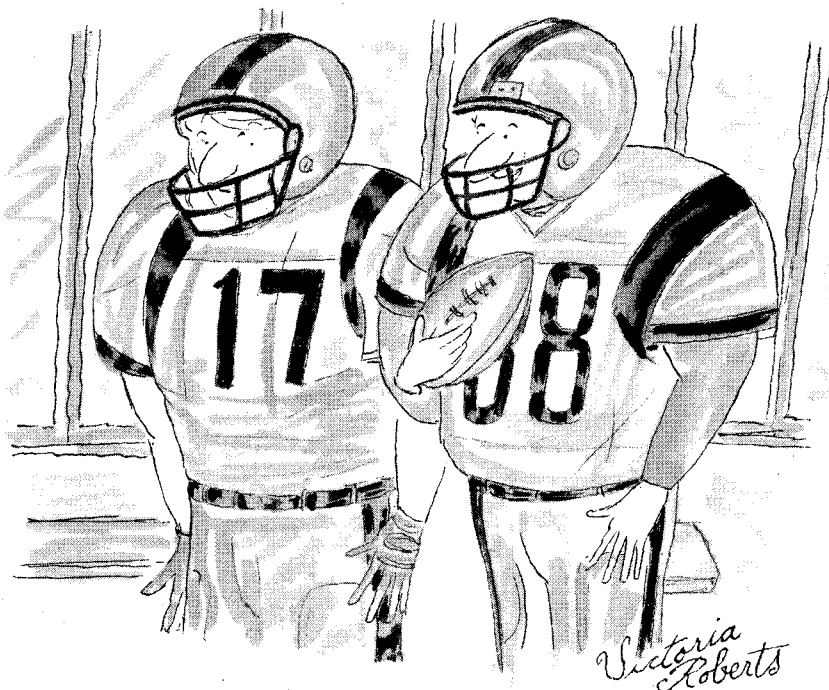
Nadine spent half her lunch hour staring at the barred windows on the brown building across the alley, watching the psych nurses scribbling in charts and filing them, rushing to answer sudden calls from the ward. No one would ever get past the wall of nurses to reach the window and dive to the alley, she realized, unless it was a nurse with a blowtorch and a death wish.

Josette walked up to the table earlier than usual, obviously looking for her.

"What is it?" Nadine asked.

"Se Ms. Hinds," said Josette. "She





"When you put on the uniform, you surrender a part of yourself."

would like to say goodbye to you."

She thought of asking Josette to tell Ms. Hinds that she could not be found, but fearing that this would create some type of conspiratorial camaraderie between them, decided against it.

Ms. Hinds and her parents were waiting by the elevator bank in the ward. Ms. Hinds was sitting in a wheelchair with her discharge papers and a white plastic bag full of odds and ends on her lap. Her father, a strapping, hulking man, was clutching the back of the wheelchair with moist, nervous hands, which gripped the chair more tightly for fear of losing hold. The mother, a plump, fleshy woman, whose height nearly matched the father's, looked as though she were fighting back cries, tears, a tempest of anger, bartering with God.

Instead she fussed, trying to wrench the discharge papers and the white plastic bag from her daughter, irritating Ms. Hinds, who raised her pad from beneath the pile of papers and scribbled quickly, "Nurse Osnac, these are my parents, Carole and Justin Hinds."

Nadine shook each parent's hand in turn.

"Glad to make your acquaintance," said the father.

The mother said nothing.

"Thank you for everything," said the father. "Please share our thanks with the doctors, the other nurses, everyone."

The elevator doors suddenly opened and they found themselves staring at the bodies that filled it to capacity—the doctors and nurses travelling between floors, the walk-in patients from floors above them, the visitors. The Hindses let the doors close and the others departed without them.

Ms. Hinds turned to an empty page toward the back of her pad and wrote, "Goodbye, Nurse Osnac."

"Good luck," Nadine said.

Another elevator opened. There were fewer people in it this time, and enough room for all the Hindses and the discharge nurse. The father pushed the wheelchair, which jerked forward, nearly dumping Ms. Hinds face first into the elevator.

The elevator doors closed behind them sharply, leaving Nadine alone facing a distorted reflection of herself in the wide, shiny metal surface. She thought of her parents, of Eric, of the pebble in the water glass in her bedroom at home, all of those things belonging to the widened, unrecognizable woman staring back at her from the closed doors. ♦

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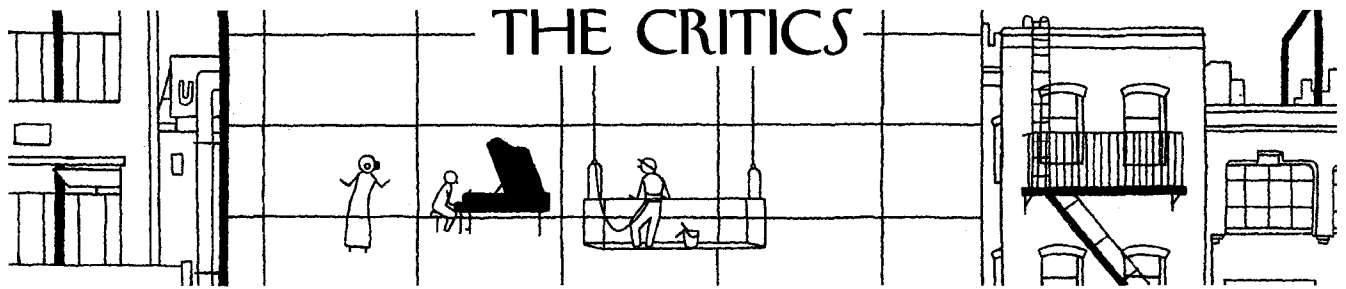
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BOOKS

COMP TIME

Is college too late to learn how to write?

BY LOUIS MENAND

It is a strange fact of life on earth that a human being who reaches college age under the impression that “it’s” is the possessive form of “it” cannot be disabused of that belief. No amount of red ink will wash it out. When I was a college writing teacher and knew no better, I used to deduct half a grade for the misuse of “it’s.” This was using a flyswatter on an ox: students took the hit and moved on, confident that somewhere, in some other classroom, there existed a teacher who shared their primitive faith.

A few other grammatical superstitions are similarly ineradicable after high school—the belief, for instance, that the semicolon is essentially a big comma. Students who hold this view will listen politely to the orthodox interpretation of the semicolon and its uses, and then, in their next paper, they will stick a semicolon right in the middle of a clause. If you ask them why they put the semicolon there, they will reply, very sweetly, “For emphasis.”

For many years, the almost hopeless task of undoing this tangle of hearsay and delusion fell largely to graduate students in English departments, people whose own writing abilities were not necessarily greater than those of the average sociology student, and whose training in the science of instruction was entirely on the job. The business has since been taken over, in many places, by persons credentialled in a field called Rhetoric and Composition, or, as it refers to itself, Rhet Comp.

Rhet Comp specialists have their own nomenclature: they talk about things like “sentence boundaries,” and they design instructional units around concepts like “Division and Classification” and “Definition and Process.” These are trained, disciplined professionals. They understand writing for what it is, a technology, and they have the patience and the expertise to take on the combination of psychotherapy and social work that teaching people how to write basically boils down to.

David R. Williams, Ph.D., the author of “Sin Boldly! Dr. Dave’s Guide to Writing the College Paper” (Perseus; \$7.95), is not one of these new writing clinicians. He is a throwback to the days when teaching college students how to write was assumed to be the sort of thing anyone interested in literature was competent to do. Dr. Dave’s particular interest is American literature—he wrote his dissertation on the Puritans—and his observations on writing are accompanied by sample exegeses of (among other standards) “The Awakening,” “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest,” “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” and “Moby-Dick.”

Dr. Dave attended college exactly when you would expect a person now calling himself Dr. Dave to have attended college, in the nineteen-sixties, so he has been grading papers for a long time. He works at George Mason University, in Virginia, and anyone who reads his book will feel that he must be very good at his job. He is witty and di-

rect, he draws on a stock of sophomore-appropriate illustrations from sources like “Doonesbury” and “The Simpsons,” and he has a firm grasp of the serial comma. On the other hand, he styles himself something of an academic maverick. In this respect, he may exaggerate a little. Dr. Dave is readily categorizable as a politically incorrect liberal, the sort of person who thinks that Ronald Reagan is an idiot and that people in wheelchairs are cripples and ought to be referred to as such. There are probably a lot more people like him in academe than an outsider might guess. But few of those people are as up front about the politically incorrect side of their views as he is, and it is fair to warn students that “Dr. Dave’s Guide to Writing the College Paper” will be helpful mainly as a guide to writing college papers for Dr. Dave. Its advice should be used in other people’s classrooms with caution. Dr. Dave is a big proponent of a writer’s “voice,” and he prefers voices that are distinctly out there. He seems to feel that students should write like Camille Paglia. It is not completely settled that even Camille Paglia should write like Camille Paglia; what can be said with confidence is that she is not a writer whom college students would be prudent to imitate.

Sections of “Dr. Dave’s Guide” are given over to rants against Marxism and deconstruction—theories that Dr. Dave, for some reason, regards as virtually synonymous. Students can, and probably should, skip these pages. On the purely technical aspects of term-paper writing—one of those skills in life that people are obliged to master in order to be excused from ever practicing them again—Dr. Dave’s advice is generally mainstream and judicious, and it can be heeded with profit. Except by students for whom it can’t—and here



In many colleges, writing instruction is done by Rhetoric and Composition experts, who consider it something of a science.

we run up against the fundamental difficulty of trying to teach people how to write, which is that there is no one way to do it.

The interesting thing about the organized effort to dispel the fog of superstition and anxiety about writing that many people bring with them to college is that it consists largely of the

incantation of another set of superstitions, probably equally effective or ineffective, depending on the person who adopts them. It's the classic missionary appeal: replace those bad rituals with these good rituals, and we guarantee salvation.

Students are often told, for example, to write many drafts. (Dr. Dave recom-

mends four.) The general line is "get your thoughts down on paper," push right through to the conclusion, and then go back and revise. But would you tell a builder to get the skyscraper up any way he or she could, and then to go back and start working on the foundations? I think not. I think you would tell a builder to set down one row of bricks,

and, when that row looked pretty sound, to put some mortar (or whatever stuff builders use) on top of it and set down the next row. Seamlessness is the illusion you are seeking to create; you cannot achieve it by accident. Why burn through limited time and brain cells trying to coax coherence out of a ramshackle string of half-baked ideas embedded in badly written sentences when you could be forging your verbal chain one exquisite and unbreakable link at a time? Here is a scandalous thing to say, but it's true: you are reading the first draft of this review.

Which is not to say that it is any more seamless, exquisite, or even literate than the next thing you will read, only that its author could not have written it any other way. Many people find this method an affront to Enlightenment values. Lionel Trilling once wrote a halfhearted introduction to a posthumous collection of essays by the critic Robert Warshow, entitled "The Immediate Experience," in which he reported that Warshow waited until he was completely satisfied with the sentence he had in his head before he wrote it down, and that he then proceeded to the next sentence without ever looking back. Trilling plainly found this procedure repellent. In fact, Trilling himself was a famously blocked writer. A brick-by-brick person might suggest that he should have stopped composing drafts; but that was just the way Trilling wrote, and he was, in the end, a better writer than Warshow. Trilling's essays read as though they had been written one finished sentence at a time, and Warshow's read as though he probably should have done one more draft.

Then there's the whole "get your thoughts down on paper" routine. This belongs to the psychotherapeutic side of writing instruction. One reason people have trouble writing, the theory goes, is that they have a subconscious phobia about soiling the nice, clean page with their messy mental effluvia; if they can be persuaded just to go with the, as it were, flow, they will eventually conquer their self-loathing and turn into happy and well-adjusted little graphomaniacs.

This confuses two aspects of writing. Writing, even term-paper writing, is a kind of self-disclosure, and a natural

instinct of prudery does tend to inhibit people when they are faced with the task. These people can be treated; shamelessness can be taught. It also seems to be the case that people discover what they have to say in the process of writing it. But writing, even term-paper writing, is also an effort to express an idea, and if you don't have an intelligent idea in your head writing a stupid one down in a notebook is not going to help you. Once on paper, words assume a horrifying concreteness. All the beautiful fluidity of thought is gone, replaced by rows of squalid and humorless squiggles. Yet these squiggles (this is the horrifying part) have somehow become "your idea." They won't go away, and they won't change by themselves. "If you want your idea to get better," they seem to say, "you will have to deal with us." But you are already realizing, as you stare at them, that your idea is utterly vapid—and you haven't even had it yet.

Still, one hears all the time of writers honored for the crystalline elegance of their aperçus who kept notebooks. "He would sometimes arise in the middle of the night and write for an hour in his notebook," one reads of some deceased belletrist. Maybe an inability to get depressed by the inanity of anything you scribble down is a prerequisite for literary productivity and renown. But it does not follow that a college sophomore can expect to benefit from the future contemplation of random midnight jottings. The belief that if you wrote it, it must mean something is probably responsible for half the world's bad writing.

Finally, there is the business about "voice." Dr. Dave's point about the importance of developing one is well

UNTITLED

Here is what the mind does
to compensate for the spiritual silence:
in the shadow of Our Lady of the Rocks,
I thought I saw an elderly parishioner's
sweatered sleeping form under the noon's
press of light. But it was a stem of phlox.

—Karl Kirchwey

taken, but the metaphor is misleading. The trouble most students have with grammar and punctuation comes from their assumption that one of the goals of writing is the reproduction of speech effects—which is why, for example, they insist on using commas and semicolons "for emphasis." In fact, speech is characterized by all the things writing teachers tell students to eliminate from their prose in the interest of clarity: repetition, contradiction, exaggeration, run-ons, fragments, and clichés, plus an array of tonal and physical inflections—drawls, grunts, shrugs, winks, hand gestures—unreproducible in written form. People talk for hours without uttering a single topic sentence. Yet we generally understand speech perfectly and instantaneously. We don't have to keep going over the same sentence three times to figure out what the person is trying to say. People communicate with their bodies much more effectively than they do on paper. You cannot make a semicolon mistake when you're talking. You can stick that emphasis any place you want, baby.

But the illusion persists that the spoken word can somehow be carried over into print with all its personality and expressiveness intact. Friends of the critic Desmond MacCarthy, who was a member of the Bloomsbury circle, thought that he was a fantastic talker, and that his genius was never reflected adequately in his writing. One day, some of them invited MacCarthy over, and hired a stenographer to hide outside the room and record his conversation. MacCarthy showed up and obliged by talking brilliantly. After he left, the friends waited impatiently for the transcription to arrive. They read it. The writing was completely banal. ♦

THE THIRD WAY

Kazuo Ishiguro mixes method and madness.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

If Kazuo Ishiguro is obsessed with imperialism, he has cause. Born in Nagasaki in 1954—his mother was wounded in the 1945 bombing—he landed in England at the age of five, when his father, an oceanographer, took an assignment on a North Sea project. The father thought the job was temporary; he told his family they would soon move back to Japan. But they never did. Today Ishiguro lives in London with his Scottish wife and is one of England's most honored novelists (Booker Prize, Whitbread Award), a member of the "post-colonial" group, who have married the tradition of Austen and Dickens to the global culture that rose from the ashes of nationalism after the Second World War.

True to his roots, Ishiguro set his first two novels, "A Pale View of the Hills" (1982) and "An Artist of the Floating World" (1986), in post-war Japan. Then, in his next two, he switched to Europe, and showed us his transcultural spurs. The celebrated "Remains of the Day" (1988) took place not just in England but in England's very brain stem; the book is narrated by an English butler, and to hear Ishiguro on the subject of silver polish is like listening to Nabokov on chewing gum and motels. Now, with his fifth novel, "When We Were Orphans" (Knopf, \$25), Ishiguro has placed his story between two cultures. The book is set in Shanghai, but in that city's International Settlement, the enclave of British, French, and American invader-entrepreneurs who made China their bazaar from the mid-nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth. As in all of Ishiguro's previous novels, we have a first-person narrator looking back, and, as in most of those novels, what we look back on is a story of coöperation with imperialism.

The narrator is one Christopher



There is a loss of certainty in the new novel, and a deepening of thought.

Banks, born in the International Settlement just after the turn of the century, the son of an officer with a British trading company. As we soon discover, the company's primary trading commodity is drugs. The firm is part of the thriving commerce whereby, for many years, the English have been importing Indian opium to China, thus reaping huge profits and keeping the Chinese populace on its knees, unable to resist Western domination. Banks's mother puts pressure on her husband to take a stand against this scandalous business. He apparently does so, and then he goes to work one day and never comes back. All this is seen through the eyes of a child. Soon afterward the mother, too, disappears—a hair-raising scene, the boy dazed with panic and grief.

The curtain is then discreetly rung down, and we next find Banks back in England, embarked upon an adult life that seems a sort of reparation for his childhood trauma. He has become a detective, a finder of missing persons. He is happy enough, he says, but sud-

denly he decides that he must go back to Shanghai and find out what became of his parents. Unfortunately, the year is 1937, when Shanghai is not only torn between the Communists and the Nationalists but is also being invaded by the Japanese. Meanwhile, the Europeans are still there, drinking and screwing among the potted palms. Undeterred, Banks arrives in Shanghai and sets about his quest. This culminates in a bizarre, brilliant scene, fifty pages long, in which, crawling through rubble, climbing over corpses, he at last reaches the house where he believes his parents were brought by their kidnappers.

But how much of this actually happens? In his early novels Ishiguro was absolutely wedded to realism. Yes, his narrators were "unreliable," but that is simply an advanced form of realism. He also employed very standard novelistic conventions—above all, those of the detective novel—but, as with his narrators, he used them subversively, in the service of a greater truth. By the time he wrote "The Remains of the Day," he had complete mastery of his method. As he told the *Guardian*, he could predict his readers' responses line by line: "A laugh here. Sad here. . . . I'd learned to do it and so I did it." He seems, at last, to have found the see-through-the-narrator realism too easy, too confident of what reality was. (I agree. "The Remains of the Day," which is the one that got the Booker Prize—a Merchant Ivory movie, too—was way overpraised. End-of-empire England, PBS's *England*: people can't get enough of it.) So in his next novel, "The Unconsoled" (1995), he threw the formula away, producing something like a five-hundred-page anxiety dream. To many who had loved "The Remains of the Day," the new book seemed a betrayal.

Now comes "When We Were Orphans." For most of the early part of the novel, as Banks describes his childhood in Shanghai, Ishiguro reverts to realism, and deploys it with greater mastery than ever before. The way we recall early-childhood events, the way we remember the house, not the whole place but just the bannister, and the hallway where we overheard our parents fighting: he has it down, as

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down as you could get it. But then, as he gets into his hero's adult life, things begin to blur. Banks adopts a child, an orphan like himself, who seems a dream figure, or doppelgänger. He pursues a woman, another orphan, who appears to be a character out of someone else's novel, namely "Brideshead Revisited." (Like Sebastian Flyte, she travels with her Teddy bear.) And the events become decidedly weird, particularly once we return to China. Not only Banks but, as he tells it, the entire European community in the International Settlement believe both that he will rescue his parents—after twenty-five years—and that he will thereby, somehow, rescue Shanghai. Are we just back in unreliable-narrator territory? That's what we think at first. But, unlike Ishiguro's early novels, this one never points us to the reality we're supposed to read through the narrator's distortions. At the same time, it never actually renounces realism. The minute we say to ourselves, "That's it—Banks has lost his marbles," he once again relates a scene that transpires altogether normally. Back and forth the novel goes, to the point where the suspense of the plot—will Banks find his parents?—becomes almost secondary to the suspense of the narrative mode: Is this a story or a nightmare? Realism or surrealism? Austen or Kafka?

With this loss of certainty comes a deepening of thought. Ishiguro's early novels were all about solipsism, the mind's imprisonment in its own experience—a matter that he played off against early-twentieth-century history, against imperialism. In the new novel, solipsism is not just related to imperialism; it is the cause. In a horrifying scene that is also quite funny, Banks, on his crawl through the bombed-out slums of Shanghai, comes upon a group of Chinese, huddled over a Japanese soldier whom they have captured and tied up. Banks sees that the soldier is his childhood friend Akira, and he attempts to rescue him:

"Now look," I stood up and cried at the crowd. "You've made a mistake. This is a good man. My friend. *Friend*. . . He's going to help me. *Help me solve the case*." I raised the revolver. . . Then an old man

pushed to the front, a young girl holding his hand.

"I speak English," he said.

"Well, thank goodness for that," I said. "Kindly tell everyone present that this man here is my friend. That he's going to help me."

"Him. Japanese soldier. He kill Aunt Yun."

"I'm sure he didn't. Not him personally."

Because Akira is *his* friend, one who is going to help him solve *his* case, Banks assumes that the Chinese should let this enemy soldier go, and the hell with Aunt Yun. Likewise, in the opium trade, the Europeans had their needs. Surely the Chinese could see that.

In keeping with this line of thought, Ishiguro, famous for his restraint, his things-unsaid, his twilight colors—so English! so Japanese!—produces a bloody sort of *cri de coeur*. Banks hears a wounded Japanese soldier screaming in the rubble. Later there are more screams, and Banks assumes it is the same man. Then:

I realised he was shouting in Mandarin, not Japanese. The realisation that these were two different men rather chilled me. So identical were their pitiful whimpers . . . that the notion came to me this was what each of us would go through on our way to death—that these terrible noises were as universal as the crying of newborn babies.

Such a statement you would not find in the earlier novels, and whatever the beauty of those books—"An Artist of the Floating World" is still my favorite—it is a relief to see Ishiguro lose patience and speak bluntly at last. ♦

HOW'S THAT AGAIN? DEPARTMENT
From an Arlington, Virginia, street map.

For the truly adventurous, the residential numbering system is easily understood. The easiest to grasp is the named streets. The dwelling numbers correspond to the numbered cross streets. For example, the 1300 block of Nelson St. (North or South) is between 13th and 14th St. The numbering system on the numbered streets is trickier, it helps to remember two rules; 1) the numbers are based on a twenty three letter alphabet (with a couple of exceptions; no street names begin with letters x, y or z); 2) use four alphabets (one for each syllable). For example, the 2700 block of any numbered street will be between Danville and Edgewood (Danville is the fourth letter in the alphabet with two syllable names; 23 letters in the one syllable alphabet +4 letters in the two syllable alphabet = 27).

BRIEFLY NOTED

NYPD: A City and Its Police, by *James Lardner and Thomas Reppetto* (Holt; \$27.50). This engrossing history of the New York Police Department begins in 1802, with the reign of the high constable Jacob Hays, who handled rowdies by knocking their hats off their heads with his gold-tipped staff; later in the century, violent crime became more common, as did corruption, brutality, racism, and incompetence. Scandal, of course, was followed by reform; the authors argue, in fact, that the cycle of dirty cops and departmental cleanup has recurred roughly every twenty years. Although the book is short on analysis, it is crammed with diverting anecdotal material, including mini-biographies of law-enforcement luminaries such as Police Commissioner Teddy Roosevelt and the Roaring Twenties supercop Johnny Cordes, a favorite of gossip columnists. And if recent atrocities are only skimmed, this vast history shows that nearly every incident, no matter how shocking, is merely an echo of one that has come before.

Into the Looking-Glass Wood, by *Alberto Manguel* (Harcourt; \$13). Any writer who interested this Argentine-Canadian literary critic would long to meet him: you could have the conversation of your dreams. In one of the essays collected here, Manguel describes actually seeking out an obscure Canadian poet, Richard Outram, whom he champions rousing and convincingly; in another, memories of Borges and his thwarted romances are leavened by the author's own tragicomic sensibility. He also recalls Argentina's "dirty war," in which many of his high-school friends died—turned in, he later learns, by the teacher he most looked up to. Manguel is not only a gentleman and a scholar but a gentleman as a scholar, offering constellations of connected readings and insights with grace, humor, and tact.



Mary Wollstonecraft: A Revolutionary Life, by *Janet Todd* (Columbia; \$29.95). Born into a middle-class family in 1759, Wollstonecraft worked as a governess and a teacher, but was convinced that she was superior to her jobs, and certain that she could manage her sisters' lives better than they. She couldn't; she could barely manage her own, as she discovered when Gilbert Imlay, an American and a fellow-radical whom she had met in Paris during the French Revolution, deserted her and their child. Wollstonecraft twice attempted suicide, but most of the time she called on a desperate vitality and turned her experiences into a literary career. Her turbulent existence eventually improved, with her marriage to the English radical William Godwin, but she died in childbirth, at the age of thirty-eight. Throughout this humane and absorbing biography, Todd usefully places the writings, like "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman," in their historical context, but in the end she finds Wollstonecraft's life and her letters more modern in their outspoken sensibility than her formal literary legacy.

Silent Screens, by *Michael Putnam* (Johns Hopkins; \$39.95). "Willingly and unwillingly," Putnam declares, in an introduction to his book of photographs, "I have taken responsibility for preserving things that are passing from the world." This elegiac tone echoes the black-and-white pictures: a litany of shuttered single-screen movie houses across America, in varying degrees of decay. One series of photographs documents the 1987 demolition of the Pekin Theatre, a bit of architectural Chinoiserie in Pekin, Illinois; another portrays theatres that have been converted into bookstores, restaurants, a shooting gallery, an indoor swimming pool, and, most commonly (and appropriately), churches. Several years after "The Last Picture Show," Larry McMurtry hoped for "some present-day Walker Evans" to document the abandoned theatres of his youth, and Putnam has answered his wish.

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BY WHITNEY BALLIETT

The brilliant Gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt was born Jean-Baptiste Reinhardt, near Liverchies, Belgium, on January 23, 1910, and died, of a stroke, in Fontainebleau, on May 16, 1953, after a pleasant day of fishing on the Seine. Between 1934, when he and the violinist and pianist Stéphane Grappelli formed the Quintet of the Hot Club of France, and the late forties, when the electric guitar and bebop began closing in on him, he made hundreds of recordings, appeared all over Britain and Europe, and became one of the most famous jazz musicians in the world. Charles Delaunay, who created the first jazz discography and shepherded Django through much of his sometimes chaotic professional life, said of Reinhardt, during a visit to America in the seventies, "There were two personalities in him. One was primitive. He never went to school and he couldn't stand a normal bed. He had to live in a Gypsy caravan near a river, where he could fish and catch trout between the stones with his bare hands, and where he could put laces between the trees and catch rabbits. But Django also had a nobility, even though he could be very mean to the musicians who worked for him."

Male Gypsies exist in a timeless macho continuum in which obligations and appointments are largely meaningless. In 1946, Django, dreaming of sitting with Hollywood stars by their pools, finally got to America for a three-month tour. He travelled with the Duke Ellington Band in its private railroad car, and it played in Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, and Pittsburgh before finishing up with two nights at Carnegie Hall. But, on the evening of the second concert, Django ran into the French boxer Marcel Cerdan, who had a scheduled bout at Madison Square Garden, and, slipping into Gypsy time, went to a bar with Cerdan to drink

and talk about life and France. When he suddenly remembered where he was supposed to be, he jumped into a cab and, because he spoke almost no English, ended up somewhere on the East Side. He got to Carnegie Hall at eleven o'clock and probably played the same four numbers, backed by the band, that he had played in Chicago—



Django's huge hands created an almost disembodied, alternately delicate and roaring whorl of music. (The clarinetist Gérard Lévêque is on the right.)

a blues, a variation of "Tiger Rag," one of his own dreaming pieces, and "Honkeysuckle Rose." (The Chicago concert was recorded.) The applause was reportedly thunderous. Ellington, in his autobiography, "Music Is My Mistress," says of Reinhardt, "Among those I think of as citizens of Paris was Django Reinhardt, a very dear friend of mine, and one whom I regard as among

the few great inimitables of our music. I had him on a concert tour with me in 1946, so that I could enjoy him the more."

Delaunay, who was the son of the unique and celebrated Parisian geometric colorists Sonia and Robert Delaunay, supervised most of Reinhardt's recordings. This, he said, is what music meant to Reinhardt: "Life for Django was all music. He was full of constant enthusiasm when he played—shouting in the record studio when someone played something he liked, shouting when he played himself. . . . When he was accompanying in the bass register he sounded like brass, and in the treble like saxophones. He had a

constant vision of music—a circle of music—in his head. I think he could see his music." Reinhardt's style had such presence and power and imagination that, in the manner of masters like Charlie Parker and Sidney Catlett and the Armstrong of the early thirties, he surpassed his very instrument. He created an almost disembodied, alternately delicate and roaring whorl of music.

FRANK DRIGGS COLLECTION

Charlie Christian, who flourished between 1939 and 1941, when Django was near the top of his powers, became the first consummate electric guitarist and, following Lester Young's lead on tenor saxophone, fashioned long, horn-like lines that had their own flawless logic and beauty. (Jim Hall, the paramount guitarist, still idolizes Christian, and Hall, in turn, is idolized by such contemporary guitarists as Pat Metheny. Reinhardt's utter originality largely confounds imitation.) But Reinhardt turned the songs he played inside out, decorating them with his winging vibrato, his pouring runs and glisses, his weaving and ducking single-note lines, and his sudden chordal tremolos and offbeat explosions. All these sounds were controlled by an adventurous rhythmic sense. Like Billie Holiday and Red Allen and Jimmy Rowles, he could leap ahead of the beat, or fall behind it, or ride it mercilessly. And this rhythmic sense was constantly colored by his dynamics, which moved back and forth between flutters and whispers, talking tones, and cascades and roars. Two peculiarities shaped Reinhardt's playing: he had enormous hands, and the two smallest fingers on his left hand—his fret-board hand—were permanently bent at the second knuckle. (They had been burned in a fire in his caravan, and he was so badly injured that his wounds never healed properly.) The huge hand made the crippled fingers work nonetheless: thus the mysterious chords and melodic lines that no one had heard before.

Reinhardt might start a medium-tempo ballad with three or four bars of slightly altered melody, played in single notes behind the beat, each phrase graced by his vibrato (almost a tremble), pause for a beat, and go into a brief mock double-time, rest again, drop in an abrupt, massive chord, and release a hissing upward run. Then he'd cut his volume in half and turn into the bridge with a delicate, fernlike single-note variation of the melody, letting his notes linger and bend and float on his vibrato. Just before the end of the bridge, he would loose another offbeat chord, let it shimmer for three or four beats, work through a humplike arpeggio, lower his volume again, and return to a single-note variation of the original melody

and come to rest. Almost all his solos in the thirties and early forties have an exotic romanticism, a hothouse quality; the notes roll and echo with Eastern European and Spanish overtones. Armstrong and Ellington had taught him to swing and be cool, but he filtered them through his Gypsy mind.

The original Quintet of the Hot Club of France grew indirectly out of various string groups led by the violinist Joe Venuti and the guitarist Eddie Lang in the late twenties and early thirties. But its instrumentation of violin, solo guitar, two rhythm guitars, and bass was unique. From the beginning, it was a swinging, lithesome group, at ease with big-voiced up-tempo numbers, twirling ballads, and direct haunting blues. It certainly presaged Benny Goodman's small groups, Artie Shaw's Gramercy Fives, and even the Modern Jazz Quartet (consider John Lewis's beautiful anthem "Django"). Grappelli and Reinhardt experimented ceaselessly with the quintet on its recordings. They used one or two violins, they subtracted a rhythm guitar, there were violin-and-guitar duets, guitar-and-bass duets, and solo-guitar numbers. Grappelli occasionally played piano (he loved Art Tatum), and later in the quintet's life, if Grappelli was unavailable, one and sometimes two clarinets were added. The original quintet (with some personnel changes) lasted from December 2, 1934, when it gave its first public performance in Paris, until September 3, 1939, when Britain and France declared war on Germany. The group had been touring Britain with great success, and Grappelli decided to stay in England, where he lived off and on for the rest of his life. Reinhardt and the remainder of the quintet took one of the last boats back to France, and they somehow survived, and even flourished, despite the Nazi interdiction on Gypsies. (Django kept on the move, working in the South of France and in North Africa, disappearing occasionally into the Gypsy netherworld, and once trying to cross the border into Switzerland.) Grappelli and Reinhardt were reunited in England in 1946 (the first number they played together was the "Marseillaise"), and they made their last recordings in Rome in 1949.

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nineteen numbers in a new Mosaic reissue ("The Complete Django Reinhardt and Quintet of the Hot Club of France Swing/HMV Sessions 1936-1948") are by the quintet or its variations and are full of such beauties as the spaces between Django's notes on "Solitude," and his rustling tremolos behind sweet Grappelli (who finally found his strength and fervor in the sixties, when he began playing worldwide to great acclaim); his delicate, barely audible opening chorus on "When Day Is Done"; the astounding train piece "Mystery Pacific," which has roaring staccato chords, played at a blinding tempo by three low-register guitars; his four exquisite choruses on "I'll See You in My Dreams," accompanied only by a bass, and the wild, elbowy up-tempo "You Rascal You," again done with just a bass; and the almost atonal notes in "Little White Lies," with the clarinetist Hubert Rostaing's lifting "organ" chords behind Reinhardt. American music was outlawed by the Nazis, so "Exactly Like You" became "Pour Vous," "Little White Lies" became "Petits Mensonges," and "Dark Eyes" became "Les Yeux Noirs."

In 1935, when the quintet was barely a year old, Django, already sought after, began sitting in on occasional recordings with visiting American musicians, among them Coleman Hawkins, Benny Carter, Bill Coleman, Dicky Wells, Rex Stewart, Barney Bigard, Eddie South, and Larry Adler. These recordings are not part of the Mosaic issue, but fifty-seven of them are on a DRG album, "Django with His American Friends." He is given solo space on roughly half the numbers, starting with the loose, joyous sides made by Coleman, Shad Collins, and Bill Dillard on trumpets, Wells on trombone, Dick Fullbright on bass, and Bill Beason on drums. Django takes a floating blues chorus on "Bugle Call Rag," while the trumpets riff softly in the distance, and he delivers one of his great shouts near the end of "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea." He has a full chorus on the classic slow blues "Hangin' Around Boudon," with Wells and Coleman behind him, and he fashions one of his pre-bebop solos on "Japanese Sand-

man." Bill Coleman reappears with a French-American group, and Django solos on the slow "Big Boy Blues," backed only by the drummer, who plays a stark press roll with his sticks. Then the Hot Club Quintet accompanies the celebrated American harmonica player Larry Adler, who, despite his massive ego, was not much of a jazz musician. He pushed his melodies into odd shapes, and he had a harsh sound. But Django counteracts him on "Body and Soul," on "Lover Come Back to Me," on a strange, fast "Melancholy Baby," and on "I Got Rhythm," often working in his ringing low and middle registers.

In 1939, Rex Stewart, Barney Bigard, and the bassist Billy Taylor arrived in Paris with the Duke Ellington band and set down five numbers with Reinhardt that remain timeless small-band performances. Stewart, dark and brooding, loved queer squeezed notes that he produced by pressing his valves halfway down, and Bigard, cheerful and circular, was the last of the rococo New Orleans clarinetists. Django's solos are easy and gentle; he sounds as if he had grown up with Stewart and Bigard. Listen, in particular, to the slow blues "Solid Old Man." Django solos twice, Bigard accompanying him—so the story goes—with whisk brooms on a suitcase. His opening solo has several silences and he uses only five or six notes, but his second solo is full of little announcements and complex hilly phrases. Stewart stays mainly in his low register, releasing a tremolo and a couple of tight half-valvings, and Bigard soars a little and finally lands down in his chalumeau register. Each of the four other numbers the quartet made has its special beauty.

Reinhardt and Grappelli have turned up elsewhere in the past several months. In the movie "Sweet and Lowdown," Woody Allen's American guitar-playing hero regards Django with fear and awe. And Grappelli bursts out of the recorded background music of the dance comedy "Contact," at the Vivian Beaumont, with "My Heart Stood Still" and "Sweet Lorraine." Grappelli, of course, knew Django as well as anyone on earth, and here is what he told me in 1974: "Ah! The

troubles he gave me! I think now I would rather play with lesser musicians and have a peaceable time than with Django and all his monkey business. One time, Django and I were invited to the Élysée Palace by a high personality"—probably Charles de Gaulle. "We were invited for dinnair, and after dessert we were expected to perform. Django did not appear. After dinnair, the high personality was very polite, but I can tell he is waiting, so I say I think I know where Django is when I don't know at all. The high personality calls a limousine and I go to Django's flat, in Montmartre. His guitar is in the corner, and I ask his wife where he is. She says maybe at the *académie* playing billiards. He was a very good player of billiards, very *adroit*. He spent his infancy doing that and being in the streets. His living room was the street. *Alors*, I go to the *académie* and when he sees me he turns red, yellow, white. In spite of his almost *double* stature of me, he was a little afraid. In the world of the Gypsy, age count, although I am only two years older than him. Also I could read, I was instructed. He have two days' *barbe* on his face and his slippers on, so I push him into the limousine and we go back to his flat to clean him up a little and get his guitar. Django was like a chameleon; *à toute seconde*, he could change keys. He was embarrassed about everything, but his *naturel* self came back, and when we arrived at the Élysée and the guard at the gate saluted the limousine, he stick up his chin and say, 'Ah! They recognize me.'"

And here is a different Django. Phoebe Jacobs, who has spent much of her life smoothing the way for the likes of Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman and Louis Armstrong, met Django two years before his death, when she was travelling in the South of France with Lucille Armstrong, Louis's wife, and Moustache, the huge Parisian club owner. "Django seemed nervous and overanxious next to Moustache, even though it was probably because of who Lucille was," she said recently. "He patted Lucille's arm and behaved almost like he was smitten with her. And when he played for her, the tenderness that came out in his music was like a man stroking a woman's breast." ♦

DANCING

HIGH STYLE

Mark Morris meets Virgil Thomson and Gertrude Stein.

BY JOAN ACOCCELLA

One day in 1987, Gérard Mortier, who at that time was the head of Belgium's royal opera house, found himself with a problem. The theatre's long-time director of dance had just walked out. Mortier needed a new choreographer, fast. He called the director Peter Sellars, and Sellars suggested Mark Morris. Who's that? Mortier asked. "I told him that Mark was the most talented choreographer I knew," Sellars later recalled, "and also that he was someone who would be right for an opera house—that he could work with orchestras and choruses, that he could appeal to a wide audience, that he could hold an opera-house stage." In mid-1987 Sellars was one of the few people in the world who could have said this with any assurance.

Morris had so far produced only one opera ballet, a "Dance of the Seven Veils" for a 1986 "Salome" at Seattle Opera. (The number was notable primarily for the fact that he actually got the soprano to strip.) As for working with orchestras and choruses, he, like most modern-dance choreographers in this land of no arts funding, had done so only rarely. By 1987, however, Morris was working on his first big opera job, "Nixon in China," and the director was Peter Sellars.

Mortier hired Morris, and he immediately saw Sellars's prophecy come true. The first thing Morris produced in Brussels was the now famous "L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato," a piece ranging over three centuries of art, employing masses of dancers, singers, and silk-

chiffon costumes, and surveying a considerable tract of human feeling, from deep-brewed melancholy to wild, stage-igniting joy. Many people would say that "L'Allegro" is the greatest modern-dance piece of the late twentieth century. It is certainly one of the most expansive, most opera-house-worthy. Four months later Morris followed it with his first danced opera—Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas"—which I would say is the greatest modern-dance piece of the late twentieth century. "Dido" was not expansive; it was tight and cruel and swift, like its score. But it showed, as "L'Allegro" had, that Morris could pierce through to the big, declamatory opera-house emotions of former centuries and use opera's full armory—orchestra, voice, dance, décor, costume—to honor those matters.

Which makes him a rare bird in his field. Modernism will surely go down in history as the most austere, self-denying style ever invented by the Western mind, and no department within it, except perhaps "modern music," was as abstemious as modern dance. The costumes tended to be long and dark, the music minimal, the message chastening. To this day, one



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In "Four Saints in Three Acts," Morris has mounted an hour's worth of dances whose leading note is childlike.

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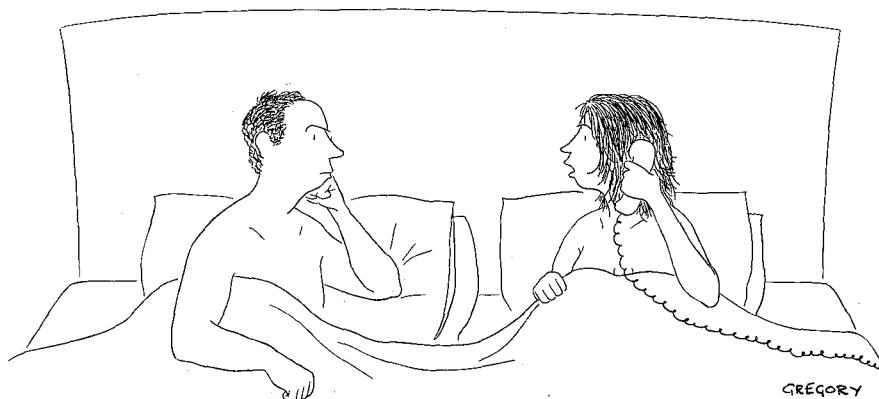
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"It's Alan Greenspan—he thinks we're moving too fast."

of the most frightening things you can say to someone is "Let's go to a modern-dance concert!" A few modern-dance choreographers (not surprisingly, the ones who became most popular: Graham, Ailey, Taylor, Tharp) dared to cook up a little story, strike up a little tune, put a ruffle on the skirts, but they were the exceptions. The modern-dance tradition—Morris's tradition—was severe, and for a time, particularly when he had no money, that was O.K. by him.

So what happened to him in Belgium? Money, for one thing—an orchestra and a chorus, a set shop and a costume shop. (Since "Dido," Morris has directed four more operas. All but one were funded largely from Europe, with those European arts budgets.) But in truth Morris was born for the opera-house stage. From his childhood, he has been obsessed with vocal music. As he once put it in an interview, "When you have a person . . . playing the violin, you have the sound of that, but it's one generation removed from the body. Singing is like dancing. It's the body, the body in the world, and nothing in between." One could even say that Morris's dance style, the visceral, exposed look of his dancers' bodies, is an imitation of the voice. "I'd rather be a singer than a dancer," he has said, "but as a dancer I'm a pretty good singer." So it's no surprise that so many of his dances were set to songs, and from songs to opera is not far to go.

Then there is the sheer elaborateness of opera, its fine manners and feathered hats, its potion-taking and oath-swearing. I have said that Morris's tradition is modern dance, but he didn't actually join that tradition until he was in his twenties. Al-

most all his early training was in Spanish dance, together with Balkan folk dance and ballet. In other words, America's most popular modern-dance choreographer wasn't trained in modern dance, which is why he never really absorbed its ban on fanciness. To many of his fans, Morris is a master of the low style, foot-smacking and sincere. But, at the same time, there has always been a long streak of high style in his dances: an interest in things extreme, artificial. In the modern period, as Auden once said, opera was the last refuge of the high style. It was inevitable that Morris would end up there.

At the end of June, Morris's new production of the Virgil Thomson-Gertrude Stein opera "Four Saints in Three Acts" had its première at the Coliseum, in London, with the Mark Morris Dance Group and the English National Opera. (Late this month, the show will arrive, with different singers, at Zellerbach Hall, in Berkeley.) "Four Saints," though it was first produced in the United States, in 1934, was written in Paris, in 1927-28, and it radiates the insolent gaiety of the Parisian twenties. The story, such as it is, has to do with Saints Teresa of Avila and Ignatius of Loyola, both Spaniards of the sixteenth century. In life, they never met. In the opera, they meet and marry (spiritually) and go to Heaven. Stein's text is in her accustomed style—that is, closer to music than to language. (The opening lines: "To know to love her so. / Four saints prepare for saints. / It makes it well fish.") Thomson's score is woven from humble American materials: rags, marches, hymns, things

that sound like "Turkey in the Straw." In the original, there were dances by the young Frederick Ashton. All the performers were black—the first time an all-Negro cast was assembled in America for a non-Negro subject. Thomson said he chose his black players for their fine voices and fine carriage. He neglected to mention that by Jazz Age logic black people were also glamorous and sexy and seemed to represent an unself-conscious religiosity, which this show needed.

Morris, in his version, has removed the singers from the stage, to boxes on the side, and in their place has mounted an hour's worth of dances whose leading note is a kind of blunt childlikeness. The dancers strum invisible guitars; they do "here is the church, here is the steeple." The choreography for St. Teresa (Michelle Yard) is full of hoppy jumps and runs. She wears white baby-doll pajamas, printed with stars, and the top balloons out as she turns. St. Ignatius (John Heginbotham) is a little older in spirit—maybe eleven. He is always busy, lifting his friend St. Teresa or running around blessing people. Apart from the two saints, there is a corps that, as in so many of Morris's pieces, clearly represents the human community. Much of the time, they go about their human business; they build things, or they do Spanish dances—jotas, faruccas, sevillanas. Sometimes they help Teresa and Ignatius. Elsewhere it seems that the two great souls are already dead, and that the people, proud to be from the same town, are worshipping them.

Sound too sweet? One spot was: the finale, where the saints are put on a swing. But, for the most part, the show is unsentimental; it achieves the difficult feat of representing blessedness as a plain, objective fact. This is due in part to Morris's habitual preference for blank faces, matter-of-fact moves. There are no beatific smiles here. Also, Morris has followed the score's lead in drawing his choreography from popular sources. When St. Ignatius has a vision of the Holy Spirit—the occasion of the opera's most famous line, "Pigeons in the grass alas"—he performs what looks like a vaudeville number. St. Teresa does some minstrel-show "high-stepping," which is made more piquant, and ironic, by the fact that Michelle Yard is black. The entry into Heaven is staged like the scene at a club entrance. Only certain people

get the nod. Somehow these jokes make no dent in the holiness of the proceedings.

Morris has always addressed religious matters very directly in his work. "Gloria" (1981), his first big hit—the company still performs it—is a dance of worship, to a Christian text. This was not a stretch for him. (His family were churchgoing Presbyterians. In his twenties, he lived for years with a man who was seriously Catholic, and who became a monk.) In his programs, on the acknowledgments page, there was always a line thanking Maxine Morris, his mother, and God. People who liked Morris never objected to this note of religiosity. Some took it as a subdivision of his "outrageousness," others simply as the product of his attachment to Baroque music, which is so often sacred music.

In the late nineties Morris's interest in religion seemed to ebb. Now, boom, we have this "Four Saints." It is curious, though, that in the "Four Saints" program booklet God has been dumped from the acknowledgments. Only Maxine Morris is thanked. My sense is that "Four Saints" is related less to the Christian feeling that we find in Morris's Baroque-based pieces than to a nondenominational exaltation which he inherited from the sixties but which was not unheard-of in the twenties. Thomson himself wrote, "Please do not try to construe the words of this opera literally or to seek in it any abstruse symbolism. If, by means of the poet's liberties with logic and the composer's constant use of the simplest elements in our musical vernacular, something is here evoked of the childlike gaiety and mystical strength of lives devoted in common to a non-materialistic end, the authors will consider their message to have been communicated." Lives devoted in common to a non-materialistic end: that's how Morris and his dancers thought of their enterprise when they started out. Morris remembers that emotion and honors it. Hence "Four Saints." The production is very simple. I found it a little underchoreographed, particularly compared with "Dido and Aeneas" (Morris's only other singers-offstage, dancers-onstage opera production), which was presented on the same bill at the Coliseum. But simplicity is central to the meaning. Some London critics found it dumb. In Berkeley, home of the sixties, it will probably go over wonderfully. In any case, it is insistent, wholly itself, no apologies—typical of Morris. ♦

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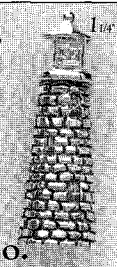
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THE PURSUITS OF LOVE

Wanted Women in "Nurse Betty" and "Whipped."

BY ANTHONY LANE

The title character of Neil LaBute's new movie, "Nurse Betty," is a sweet-heart, a pussycat, and a believer in true love. There is, of course, no law against such things. It's just that if you were in search of sugar-dusted innocence LaBute would be the last man in the world to ask. His earlier films, "In the Company of Men" and "Your Friends & Neighbors,"

type. Her husband is the doltish Del (Aaron Eckhart), who makes out with his secretary in the office; Eckhart is a LaBute regular, and Del is perhaps his most unappetizing incarnation to date. It is Del's particular misfortune to be scalped in the opening reel—bad luck, in these enlightened days, for a guy who sells Buicks. The sequence in question is pretty nasty, and I



Renée Zellweger as the transfixed soap-opera fan in Neil LaBute's new film.

were comedies of cool-blooded monstrosity, crawling with predatory males; now he has not only created Betty but hired Renée Zellweger to play her, and the result is like watching *My Little Pony* come trotting out of *Jurassic Park*.

Betty is not a nurse at all. She is a wife and a waitress from Fair Oaks, Kansas—not yet a mother, though she looks the

wondered whether LaBute wasn't steady-ing his nerve with a swipe of the old primitivism before embarking on the sweeter stuff. The killers are Charlie (Morgan Freeman) and his partner Wesley (Chris Rock); Del has something they want, although what it is—or, indeed, what the relation between our two voluble murderers may be—is not revealed until the end. "It's not

the forties, you know," Betty says, although LaBute is clearly partial to the kind of oh-my-word dénouement that Bette Davis practically had written into her contract.

The entire movie, in fact, is like a twitchy summit meeting between the chin-up values of fifty or sixty years ago and the down-in-the-mouth realities of a brave new century. Betty meets with cynicism and bloodletting, and she just plows through them as if they were made of sand. To be fair, the poor dear has taken a knock; she caught the last minutes of Del through a crack in the door, and she hasn't been the same woman since. (Again, this rehashes an old-fashioned device—the bump on the head or the slurp of magic potion that kicks your personality into next week.) Betty smiles her way past the condolences and the questioning cops, then packs her worldly goods and, with Charlie and Wesley on her tail, leaves town on the most unworldly of quests—to find Dr. David Ravell (Greg Kinnear). This could be taxing, partly because Dr. Ravell lives somewhere in Los Angeles, but also because, like many inhabitants of that distinguished city, he doesn't actually exist.

Ravell is the suitably scrubbed hero of a daytime soap, "A Reason to Love." It has long been Betty's favorite show; now, shorn of rationality, she believes it to be real. Arriving in Los Angeles, she gets a job as a nurse so that she can meet the doctor. All this is handled with dismayingly clunkiness by LaBute, who, in his creepy way, has become a master of tone (he does embarrassment better than any of his fellow-directors, if that counts as a plus), but who still seems stymied by the less delicate matter of putting his shoulder to the plot. He fudges the medical business—Betty acts heroically during a random shootout, which apparently removes the need for professional references—and then he supplies her with the right connections, not to mention the right dress, for a show-biz soirée. There the mood picks up as she finally confronts Ravell—in truth, a smarmy actor named George McCord, who treats her advances, and her tendency to call him David, as a dogged, extravagant pitch for a role on the show. "Great improv," he says.

You can see where LaBute is heading; this is a tale of *Madame Bovary* in *La-La Land*—yet another braiding of real and artificial worlds, as in "Pleasantville," with the added kink that our heroine can't tell

ROBERT RISKO

the difference. If the implication is that all soap addicts suffer the same delusion, it's a charge that has faded with overuse; you could roll up most of "Nurse Betty" and cram it into that single, sublime moment from "Tootsie" when Dustin Hoffman, at the climax of *his* medical soap, tears off his false eyelashes to reveal the man beneath, only to have a lounging Bill Murray, watching TV at home, declare, with an air of stately respect, "That is one nutty hospital." Murray's will to maintain the fiction is not only funnier but more credible than the pleading, puffy-cheeked madness of Renée Zellweger; if "Nurse Betty," like the rest of the LaBute canon, wants to make us snort and sneer, not least at our own taste for the sentimental, then the decision to wrap it around an actress who looks permanently on the verge of bursting into tears is presumably part of some subtle mission to unnerve. Since a credulous simper is Zellweger's natural bent, you can hardly claim that it was brought on by psychological trauma, which makes the rest of the story—all the mayhem and the satire—by the by.

Occasionally, as if in search of relief, the movie takes times out from the ingratiating Betty to check on the cross-country progress of her pursuers. As Charlie, the more pensive of the hit men, Morgan Freeman exudes his statutory wisdom, but he is somehow too dignified an actor to hover in the margins of a movie and service its underpowered ideas. On precious little evidence, he loses his heart to the elusive Betty—"Sort of a wholesome Doris Day thing going," as he puts it. Everyone in this picture is after a dream, or a fabrication, of someone else, and, though I never expected to say this, LaBute is not caustic or decisive enough to stick with the conceit and see it through. It's as if he had tried a little sympathy, found it tempting, and allowed it to blear his vision. The only person who emerges intact, even enhanced, is Allison Janney, who plays the producer of "A Reason to Love." Tall, slightly pop-eyed but wholly unexcitable, she has a big chorle and a wit so dry that you wonder where she keeps the olive. Janney would be a

perfect lead for a Neil LaBute movie—in the future, perhaps, when he has worked the slush back out of his system.

Being a movie about dating, "Whipped" would be a terrible choice for a dating movie. No couple could walk away hand in hand, wrapped in late-summer wistfulness, from a movie that essentially views man as a hybrid of jackhammer and chimp. The opening words are "Everybody fucks everybody"; were this literally true, the film might have proved diverting, not to say gymnastic, but, sadly, we are talking about a tiny slice of New York. There are three heat-seeking pals: a suit called Brad (Brian Van Holt), a convicted self-abuser called Jonathan (Jonathan Abrahams), and Zeke (Zorie Barber). Zeke is a writer, and, even by the sorry standards of authorial behavior, he struck me as distasteful to the point of libellous. The three meet again and again for Sunday brunch, where they mull over their conquests, past and coming; conceive their cries of dismay, therefore, when they all tumble for the same girl, Mia (Amanda Peet). She strings them along and ties them in knots, although, given that she is supposed to be smart, snappy, and luscious—indeed, given that Amanda Peet *is* smart, snappy, and luscious—her first move should surely have been to bind them with twine and drop them in the East River.

The writer, director, and producer of "Whipped" is Peter M. Cohen; I have a suspicion that some of the persons and events in this motion picture may not be totally fictitious. It has a rough, unmediated texture; Cohen is all pace and enthusiasm, and, taking a tip from Jonathan, he has ways to revive our interest when it starts to droop—note the charming vibrator-in-lavatory gag, or the rich burnish of lines like "You're different from them. . . . You're a lot more genuine." I am loath to give away the ending of "Whipped," yet only the mean of spirit would not wish to share its shock revelation: Women like sex as much as men do. *If not more.* Sometimes they even go *looking* for it. Heavens! Next thing you know, they'll be voting. ♦

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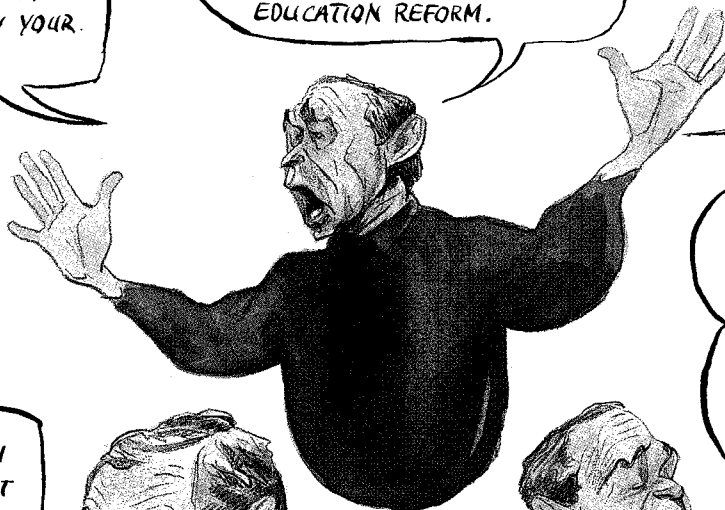


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